

CANADA'S PRIME MINISTERS AND THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS VENTURE,  
FROM "UNCLE LOUIS" TO "DIEF", 1948 to 1963

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by

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## ABSTRACT

CANADA'S PRIME MINISTERS AND THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS VENTURE,  
FROM "UNCLE LOUIS" TO "DIEF", 1948-1963, by Major Mathieu Primeau, 128  
pages

The fact that Canada possessed nuclear weapons and operationalized their use for a significant period of its recent history is relatively unknown and understudied in both Canada and in the United States. Most unfamiliar is how Canada played in the great game of the early Cold War by engaging in the strategic debate and leveraging nuclear capabilities as instruments of national power. Of this topic, much of the historic research has proved that Canada's policies and actions did fit into a sovereign and coherent national strategy, serving national interests.

With this argument in hand, this work refines how the leadership of Prime Ministers Louis St. Laurent (1948-1957) and John G. Diefenbaker (1957-1963) had an impact on Canada's nuclear weapons venture in the early Cold War from 1948 to 1963. Of different political party allegiances, with very different upbringings, and animated by very different personalities and leadership abilities, both had a very personal and profound impact on the operationalization of nuclear weapons in the Canadian Armed Forces.

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To the love of my life, Karine, who gracefully shares the duty of service with the burden of support.

This work shall be part of the heritage of two passionate individuals born on the 4th of June: my late father and daughter. They represent the past and future of a tradition of dynamism and creativity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2 LOUIS ST. LAURENT, 1948-1957 .....	5
Introduction.....	5
“Uncle Louis” .....	7
His legacy .....	10
Alliances .....	12
United Nations (UN).....	13
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) .....	14
The Korean War.....	17
Dealing with the nuclear threat .....	21
A Soviet bomb .....	23
Containment.....	24
Defending the continental airspace.....	25
Critical Capability 1: Conduct defense in depth.....	27
Critical Capability 2: Neutralize nuclear weapons .....	28
Critical Capability 3: Destroy air bombers .....	29
Leadership and sources of power.....	32
Expert power .....	33
Referential Power.....	35
Leading in crisis: the Suez Canal.....	37
Conclusion: A visionary leader.....	38
CHAPTER 3 JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER, 1957-1963 .....	42
Introduction.....	42
“The Dief” or “Dief the Chief” .....	43
An inconsistent character .....	47
World War I records .....	48
A distrust of generals .....	51
A political career thirty years in the making.....	52

His legacy .....	54
Continental air defense .....	56
A.V. Roe (AVRO) CF-105 Arrow and/or BOMARC? .....	61
Nuclear weapons for the Canadian Armed Forces.....	65
Tactical nukes for the Army in Europe.....	65
Tactical nukes for the Navy in the Atlantic .....	66
Internal fighting .....	67
Canada's NATO commitments .....	72
Dealing with the United States .....	76
A distrust of President John F. Kennedy .....	78
Leadership and sources of power.....	79
Lack of credibility .....	80
Lack of trust .....	82
Conclusion: lacking a vision.....	83
 CHAPTER 4 DIEFENBAKER AND THE CF-105 AVRO ARROW.....	86
Introduction.....	86
The AVRO ARROW project.....	87
Developments in technology.....	89
Project management challenges .....	90
Diefenbaker's leadership .....	92
Conclusion .....	94
 CHAPTER 5 DIEFENBAKER AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS .....	97
Introduction.....	97
Dief and the Cuban Missile Crisis .....	98
Who is the antagonist? Fidel Castro?.....	102
Who is the antagonist? President John F. Kennedy? .....	107
Who are the antagonists? The Communists? .....	109
Conclusion .....	110
 CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....	112
 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	115

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Critical factors analysis of the continental air defense situation in 1950 .....	27

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

We are thus not only the first country in the world with the capability to produce nuclear weapons that chose not to do so, we are also the first nuclear armed country to have chosen to divest itself of nuclear weapons.

— Pierre Elliot Trudeau, United Nations (UN), May 26, 1978

Canada's nuclear weapons' venture began in helping the United States produce the atomic bombs that ended the Second World War. Twenty years later, just about every major weapon system in the arsenal of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) had access to its own nuclear warheads through bilateral agreements with the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Royal Canadian Air Force had various types available in Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and in Canada under the Command and Control of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).<sup>2</sup> It also had nuclear ground-to-air missiles intricately networked to defend its national industrial center of eastern Ontario and southern Quebec. For its part, the Army had access to tactical nukes for both its missile launchers and as artillery rounds. The Navy's nuclear capabilities were impeded by further restraints, but were still potent.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, from the 1970s onward multiple generations of Canadians came to believe, mostly by historical omission, that Canada was a nuclear weapons virgin. Many still do.

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<sup>1</sup> Sean M. Maloney, *Learning To Love The Bomb* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007), 323-357.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 343-349.

<sup>3</sup> Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993), 68-88.

This is no coincidence, but rather the direct consequence of nuclear weapons having been both a strategic necessity for Canada—driven at the highest level of government—and a political dragnet. To the Canadian paradigm that foreign diplomacy can be accomplished better through what Joseph S. Nye Jr. defines as “Soft Power,” having yielded nuclear weapons is antithetical.<sup>4</sup> A strongly liberal Canada much prefers to adorn the mantle of its mid-century history with foreign policy “faits d’armes” based on tenets of “attraction rather than coercion or payments.”<sup>5</sup> The epitome of this well-crafted ideology is perhaps the perennial veneration of Lester B. Pearson as father of international peacekeeping, and by association and experience that of the CAF. It is informed by Lester B. Pearson having received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his lead in the peaceful resolution of the Suez Canal Crisis in the United Nations (UN) and the creation of the Emergency Force. It is illustrated, as recently as 1995, by the creation of a peacekeeping training center bearing his name (closed in 2013). Fostering such image served the Liberal government well in solidifying Canada’s image as internationalist, imbued by the universal values of peace and the willingness to help others achieve stability and security: all key tenets of soft power.<sup>6</sup> To publicize that it is also Lester B. Pearson who as Prime Minister (1963-1968) ultimately equipped the CAF with nuclear weapons would play against this much-desired paradigm.

From this example and those described later in this work, we can see that the role prime ministers played in the development of Canada’s nuclear weapons capabilities is of

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 9.

fundamental political and military importance. At the end of World War II, Mackenzie King created a legacy of Liberalism still vibrant today in Canada's identity. His protégé Louis St. Laurent brought this Liberalism to new heights of Internationalism, and with it created the foundations for the strong alliances Canada came to rely as the cornerstone of its nuclear defense policies. For his part, John G. Diefenbaker ubiquitously showed to even the most skeptical of Canadians that nuclear weapons were a strategic necessity that required the very leadership he lacked. In 1963, Lester B. Pearson indulged in such need for leadership and fulfilled Canada's Armed Forces nuclear ambitions, only to see Pierre-Elliott Trudeau essentially give them back before the end of his second tenure as Prime Minister in 1984.

There are in fact so many twists and turns to Canada's nuclear weapons venture that the most prominent historians have focused their studies on proving they were part of a coherent strategic tradition. Others have outweighed the varying points of view of critics and defenders, often with great argumentation, but little conclusiveness. Biographers also studied the prime ministers themselves and have looked at how they handled those issues, especially in the case of the highly controversial John G. Diefenbaker. However, the link between their leadership and Canada's venture with nuclear weapons has been contextual. This work explains that their leadership is its centerpiece.

In *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Lawrence Freedman suggests that the “golden age of [nuclear] contemporary strategic studies”<sup>7</sup> is the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. This is also true in the perspective of Canada’s nuclear venture, altogether from an acquisition, strategic and political standpoint. It coincided with the diametrically opposed leadership of Liberal Louis St. Laurent (1948-1957) and progressive conservative John G. Diefenbaker (1957-1963). It is for these reasons that this period will be the focus of this work. To add perspective, this monograph will also bring fourth two case studies: John G. Diefenbaker’s handling of the A.V. Roe (AVRO) CF-105 ARROW project, initiated under Louis St. Laurent, and Canada’s role in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

To analyze the leadership of past politicians from a narrowed point of view carries its risks. Prime Ministers have to balance much more than foreign policies and defense strategies, which in most circumstances are the contextual limits of this work. It is also relatively easy to erroneously associate events with the deliberate actions of a Prime Minister over that of his cabinet. This work is therefore not a simple display of repartee. Where small anecdotes are used to inform on the greater perspectives, they illustrate the norm more than they define it.

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<sup>7</sup> Lawrence Freedman, “The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, eds. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 929.

## CHAPTER 2

### LOUIS ST. LAURENT, 1948-1957

Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living.

— Omar N. Bradley, Armistice Day 1948 Address

#### Introduction

Canada emerged from the destruction of World War II as a strong middle power. 1.1 million Canadians had served in one of the services during the conflict, and as a percentage of the national population, its losses were “substantially higher than those of that other major non-European allied participant: the United States.”<sup>8</sup> As Brian Buckley also puts it in *Canada’s Early Nuclear Policy*: “in qualitative terms they had shown in the air war and in the land campaigns in Sicily, the Italian peninsula, France, Holland, Belgium, and Germany, as well as in the naval struggle in the Atlantic, that they were the equal of anyone under arms.”<sup>9</sup> Economically, between 1940 and 1944 Canada contributed \$7.5 billion in goods and services to the British war effort, “an amount well in excess of the Canadian gross national product in 1939.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments* ([Ottawa]: [Queen's Printer], 1970), puts the number of men and women who performed full-time duty in the three services at 1086343. Over 96000 were killed, wounded or died in service. The comparative assessment of losses originates from Brian Buckley, *Canada's Early Nuclear Policy* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

The atomic bombs that brought an end to World War II came as no surprise to the Canadian government, having been working in strong collaboration with the United States on the Manhattan Project.<sup>11</sup> Canada's contribution had been extensive, along with Britain, especially in research and development and the production of fissile material from its facility in Chalk River, Ontario. As Buckley explains: "Canada had independently mastered the extraction of plutonium and uranium 233 from irradiated rods, [...] a major milestone."<sup>12</sup> Canada was also beginning production of radioisotopes for peaceful purposes, which it slowly began to sell internationally. Many economies, and especially emerging countries like India, came to depend on Canada's knowledge and plutonium to construct its power generation plants. This dependence supported Canada's growing soft power. "It had brought her to the top diplomatic tables and it had demonstrated and enhanced her underlying scientific, technological, and industrial strength."<sup>13</sup>

Politically speaking, the post-war government in Canada was that of Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who had governed the country for more than twenty-one years; from 1921 to 1930 and 1935 to 1948. Now getting older and with failing health, he made a strong effort to recruit and train his successor, Louis St. Laurent. In the years to come, Louis St. Laurent, or "Uncle Louis" as he was often called, led Canada in a golden age in Internationalism.

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<sup>11</sup> Richter, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Buckley, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret M. Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 1:328.

Canada's nuclear weapons venture under St. Laurent boldly and coherently adapted to evolutions in technology and the international security environment. Under his leadership, Canada defined its own strategy, which followed Canada's strategic tradition of relative military autonomy.<sup>14</sup> His government espoused the belief that "the only kind of war which would involve Canada would be a war in which Communism was seeking to dominate the free nations."<sup>15</sup> Within this narrative, the most critical challenge of his tenure resulted from the catalytic threat of a Soviet nuclear bomber force attacking Canada's industrial center from the Arctic. This threat drove St. Laurent's government to rethink its national defense strategy with emphasis on continental air defense, in which nuclear warheads played a growing role in the decades to come. It also led to the development of NORAD.

Faced with the dilemmas of a still divided post-war world, and an often-divided Canada as well, St. Laurent worked to unite. To do so he relied extensively on personal power, both expert and referential. His government also defined a strong vision of unity at home, first and foremost, followed by a proactive stance in world affairs through continuing on Canada's strategic tradition of alliances.

#### "Uncle Louis"

Louis Stephen St. Laurent was born in Compton, in the Eastern Townships of the province of Quebec, in Canada, on February 1, 1882. He became bilingual early in his teenage years from being raised in English, but schooled in French. His father, a French

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<sup>14</sup> Refers to Canada's strategic traditions as framed by Maloney, xix.

<sup>15</sup> Richter, 13.

Canadian, was a shopkeeper and staunch supporter of the Liberal Party of Canada. His mother, Irish Canadian, instilled in the young Louis much of the discipline that became a hallmark of his personality.

Louis was a very intelligent young man, raised in learning the value of discipline and respect.<sup>16</sup> Still in his youth, he often went to his father's general store to listen to adults talking of society and politics. His father's shop and its central woodstove had become a popular social gathering place in the small community, as was often the case at the time. Although they spoke in a language he had not yet mastered, these talks contributed to forging his interest in public affairs and his understanding of the core values of the Liberal Party of Canada. Louis' first significant influence in politics was Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the first French-speaking Prime Minister of Canada, and it came mostly from his father's admiration for him.<sup>17</sup> Despite this early interest, however, it required much compelling, later in life, for him to develop any personal interest in actively participating in national politics. While it seems that he loved the dedication and service of Canada's leaders, he did not particularly like aspects of party politics. At this time, and until the 1940s, he focused his career almost exclusively on building a family law practice: quickly becoming a respected lawyer in Quebec City. As a testament to his values, in 1905 he even declined a Rhodes scholarship and instead married Jeanne Renault with whom he later had two sons and three daughters.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J. W. Pickersgill, *Louis St. Laurent* (Don Mills, Ont.: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1981), 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-9.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

During the First World War, St. Laurent observed with great concern how the issue of conscription divided English and French Canada.<sup>19</sup> Exceptionally aware of the cultural differences driving this divide, this most remarkable period in Canada's history instilled in him a strong resolve about the primacy of a united Canada, and educated him on the ways to sustain and communicate such a vision.

As a lawyer St. Laurent held some of the most prestigious positions of the nation, such as President of the Canadian Bar Association from 1930 to 1932. He was also offered a seat as Justice on the Supreme Court of Canada, which he declined to remain in Quebec for his practice.<sup>20</sup> At age 60, he agreed to enter politics only from the very personal request of then Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who appealed to his sense of duty to act as Minister of Justice in time of War.<sup>21</sup> In working together, the two of them developed similar political views, though St. Laurent was rather more an internationalist.<sup>22</sup> They also become close friends, which contributed to seeing St. Laurent hold the distinguished position of Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1945 and be elected as successor to Mackenzie King as leader of the Liberal party, to later become Prime Minister on November 15, 1948.

His nickname "Uncle Louis" came to him while campaigning, where he displayed a natural charisma that compelled children and adults alike to want to listen attentively to

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<sup>19</sup> Dale C Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent, Canadian* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), 202-210.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>21</sup> Thomson, 141-159.

<sup>22</sup> Maloney, 1.

his short and simple briefs. As Brooke Claxton, then Defense Minister, noted: “the people love to meet him and hear what he has to say.”<sup>23</sup>

### His legacy

In its military participation in both World War I and II, Canada labored to define itself as an independent nation away from being seen as a simple Dominion of the waning British Empire. An initial milestone in that direction was achieved when a first fully Canadian Army Corps seized Vimy Ridge in 1917.<sup>24</sup> It is in such ways that was born Canada’s strategic tradition of military autonomy. It continued to grow during World War II, most notably through Canadian Forces playing a distinguished role in liberating the Scheldt Estuary in North West Europe and in the Italian campaign. Under the Liberal leadership, these efforts were supplemented at home with further policies of self-determination including constitutional amendments on the role of the Royalty, Canada’s completed Confederation in 1948, and a new flag. Despite seeking greater autonomy, at the beginning of St. Laurent’s tenure Canada was still keeping very close ties with Great Britain. These had been built over centuries, and even recently through prominent domestic leadership from Britons, as characterized by Canada’s status as a constitutional monarchy.

Despite efforts to the opposite, for many Canadians and for Great Britain such loyalties were continuing to translate into an expectation that Canada had a responsibility

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<sup>23</sup> Pickersgill, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Barbara J. Honig, “‘A Continuation of Policy By Other Means:’ World War I As a Vehicle for Transformation in Canadian Governance and Military Capability” (Monographs, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2014), 77.

to support British foreign policies. In considering this fact, St. Laurent duly noted that a tri-directional tension was building. First, issues of forced overseas service had surfaced in French-speaking Quebec during the Second World War. This situation had been more aptly managed than in the case of the previous war, but it continued to illustrate the division of French and English Canadians over its allegiance to Great Britain. Despite talks of national unity, Quebec also embraced strong isolationist views and preferred to distance itself from what was perceived as an English War.<sup>25</sup> This point of view came from language difference and also in part from the differing religious views: Catholicism versus the Protestantism found in the majority of English Canada and Britain. Second, the economic partnership with the United States continued to grow exponentially, born out of geographic realities and the primacy of restoring and exploiting the post World War II economies for both governments. Third, post war prosperity and new technologies such as the television were contributing to strengthened cultural ties with the United States, and likely perceptively overshadowing those held with the old continent. Based on this split of loyalty, St. Laurent vowed to continue his life-long work to bridge these differences, arguing aptly and passionately that a “[disunited] Canada will be a powerless one.”<sup>26</sup>

St. Laurent was committed to fight Soviet Communism. Anti-communist views were prominent and shared equally between French and English Canadians, but for different reasons. Many English Canadians tended to fear and despise communism from

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<sup>25</sup> Gwynne Dyer, *Canada in the Great Power Game: 1914-2014* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2014), 113-121.

<sup>26</sup> Adam Chapnick, “The Gray Lecture and Canadian Citizenship in History,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2007): 445.

their cultural associations with old Europe. Conversely, a large proportion of French Canadians shared such quarry from the preaching of the Catholic Church.<sup>27</sup> As a French Canadian Catholic now having been many years in office in English Canada, St Laurent understood the duality of this context, and used it to as a bridge for all Canadians to unite all Canadians.<sup>28</sup>

### Alliances

St. Laurent's 1947 speech "The foundations of Canadian Policy in World Affairs," which he delivered as Secretary of State for External Affairs under Prime Minister Mackenzie King, came to depict his vision for Canada's Foreign Policy for years to come. The speech has been praised both by contemporaries and later historians, but for different reasons. Contemporaries saw it as "path-breaking in its public nature and its willingness to link national principles to individual responsibilities."<sup>29</sup> Conversely, later strategic analysts Adam Chapnick and Hector Mackenzie referred to it in *American Review of Canadian Studies* as one of the clearest expressions of what was to become Canada's very own vision for its foreign affairs policy for decades to come when under Liberal leadership.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Brian Buckley, *Canada's Early Nuclear Policy* (Montreal, Qué.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 138.

<sup>28</sup> Pickersgill, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Hector Mackenzie, 'Shades Of Gray? "The Foundations of Canadian Policy in World Affairs" In Context', *American Review of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2007), 473.

<sup>30</sup> Chapnick, 443-457; Mackenzie, 459-473.

In all accounts, the vision expressed in that speech was unequivocally focused on the primacy of maintaining the strategic tradition of alliance warfare, with Canada taking a proactive stance: “the development of international organizations on a broad scale is of the very greatest importance to us.”<sup>31</sup> In addressing political liberty in Canada, he hinted constructively to existing trends of increased autonomy in the Commonwealth, all the while not alienating the United States. In furthering his perception of respect to the primacy of Canada’s links with Britain as a Constitutional Monarchy, he inferred to the values of the Commonwealth as influencing Canada “more than any other.” He successfully applied this compromising approach until the Suez Crisis in 1956, discussed later. In that instance, his desire for justice and legitimization of the UN saw him sacrifice, in the eyes of the public and the conservative opposition, the primacy of the links with Britain. Nevertheless, throughout this intermixed period, this compromising approach of old loyalties and new alliances came to buy him support of much of the population, his party, and even many of the opposition members of parliament, and set the conditions for Canada’s emergence as a proactive middle-power in world affairs.

#### United Nations (UN)

In the early post war era, while St. Laurent was still Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Liberal government was seeking lasting peace and prosperity. It believed the best way to achieve that objective was to actively contribute to the development and legitimatization of an international organizations that would pool

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<sup>31</sup> Louis St. Laurent, “The Foundations of Canadian Policy in World Affairs,” 1947; “Alliance warfare” refers to Canada’s strategic traditions as defined by Maloney, xix.

international resources and resolve into a single cohesive entity. Canada's government therefore actively participated in the establishment of the UN on October 24, 1945. Once again much aligned with the strategic tradition of alliance warfare, King and St. Laurent intended to build within the UN a sense of unity and strength to act as a deterrent for the sort of offensive and unilateral actions that had led to the previous wars.<sup>32</sup> St. Laurent expressed much concern, however, when the right of "veto" for more powerful countries was adopted within the Security Council.<sup>33</sup> This was antithetical to Canada's aim of a UN organization, in which all nations should have a right for justice, and not just the big ones. As James Eayrs argued in *Peacemaking And Deterrence*, it went against the key themes of Canada's broader foreign and defense policy as defined as early as 1943 that "any future international organization ought to provide generously for the role of Member States other than the Great Powers."<sup>34</sup> After some thought, St. Laurent nevertheless came to believe that the right of veto was a necessary compromise for what he saw as most critical: a perception of unity. Within this context, he continued to be a driving force behind the United Nations.

#### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

In 1947, St. Laurent thought the challenge of ensuring peace and stability in Korea was an opportunity to leverage the power of the UN. In doing so, however, he grew increasingly concerned at how the veto power he had fought from the onset was

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<sup>32</sup> Thomson, 168-201.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> James Eayrs, *Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 138.

making the organization ineffective. In the General Assembly on September 8, 1947, he stated:

The World would not accept indefinitely voting procedures and practices which, in the name of unanimity, underline disunity; and which reduce agreement to a lowest common denominator of action that in practice often means inaction. . . . In practice the West might seek greater safety in an association of democratic and peace-loving states willing to accept more specific international obligations in return for greater national security.<sup>35</sup>

St. Laurent was not alone with this point of view. In January 1947, a Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO) poll concluded that thirty-one percent of those who responded believed that the UN would be able to prevent a world war over the next twenty-five years, while forty-four percent believed that it would not.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, St. Laurent's government and soon the rest of the population began to consider joining the new alliance that was to be the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

There were divisions in Canada's public opinion over joining another organization capable of "a dynamic counter-attraction to Communism, especially within Quebec secular circles who saw it as incitation to war."<sup>37</sup> In 1949, St. Laurent was therefore faced with making such a decision as newly elected Prime Minister. He decided to first clearly establish Canada's intent to continue to strengthen the UN. However, he counter-balanced the UN arguments with providing in public some hints that he would support an organization capable of improved decisive action on the world stage. In these comments, he was referring to the embryonic plan to create NATO, which Canada joined

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<sup>35</sup> Thomson, 218.

<sup>36</sup> Chapnick, 445.

<sup>37</sup> Thomson, 230.

in 1949. Upon its inception, NATO's aim became to "convince the USSR that war does not pay, and to insure a successful defense of the NATO area, should war occur."<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, at a time when Canadians had become disillusioned about their ability to influence world affairs toward peace, Canada took a lead in global affairs. St. Laurent and Person did so very personally as well, taking a proactive diplomatic role within both organizations.<sup>39</sup> In doing so, the Liberal government was quoted in the media as "having finally reached much maturity in international affairs."<sup>40</sup> In more details, Dale Thomson explains in *Louis St. Laurent, Canadian* that: "On major issues, the Canadian delegation usually supported the American policies, but this was often to be explained by the fact that the Canadians had exercised a significant influence behind the scenes in elaborating them. On less vital questions, Canada took a strongly independent position."<sup>41</sup> Canada's loyalty to NATO was to be deeply tested during the Cold War, most notably following the invasion of Korea.

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<sup>38</sup> George Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemaker* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1985), 110.

<sup>39</sup> One such example of their leadership is how they managed the Palestine Question. It refers to the proceedings of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), created on May 15, 1947, intent on bringing a solution to the territorial dispute between Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs. The committee was decided to be established from neutral countries, Canada taking part. The report of the committee supported the termination of the British mandate in Palestine, and made further recommendation on a united federation around Jerusalem as Capital. More information can be found in: A/RES/106 (S-1) of May 15, 1947 General Assembly Resolution 106 Constituting the UNSCOP, and: UNSCOP committee (1947). "United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly." *Vol 1, G.; A commentary on partition; Part II. Boundaries; A Technical Note on the Viability*, 1947.

<sup>40</sup> Thomson, 217.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

## The Korean War

On June 25, 1950, a North Korean military force invaded South Korea, soon supported by China, with a view to unite all of the Korean peninsula under a communist ideology.<sup>42</sup> As R.J. McMahon explains, “the impact of the Korean War on the Cold War is difficult to overstate.”<sup>43</sup> In the following four years it was to usher in a new era of military expenditure and troop growth, to include a significant push for a greater role for nuclear weapons in Europe and consequentially within NATO. Such an endeavor was initiated within the organization during the Lisbon ministerial meeting of April 1952, and the talks percolated throughout the contributing nations.<sup>44</sup> The United States led this strategic revision, assessing that the balance of power in Eastern Europe was becoming unfavorable and could not be economically maintained solely through an increase in conventional forces. A byproduct of this analysis was also the need for West Germany to be armed for its own defense.<sup>45</sup>

The next decade saw important discussions and multiple revisions to the derivative plans established by NATO, most especially Military Committee (MC) 14/1. A particular concern for St Laurent’s government was the fear that Great Britain would reduce its conventional forces in continental Europe beyond the new NATO force generation objectives to finance its own strategic nuclear weapons program. This issue

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<sup>42</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 50.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>44</sup> Maloney, 20-21.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

was exacerbated by the US Atomic Energy Act of 1945, which limited the sharing of nuclear weapons technology by the United States.<sup>46</sup> During the Military Committee (MC) 14/1 talks, St. Laurent's government also noted that little consideration was being made of the possibility that the Soviet Union could also attack Canada with nuclear weapons, and used this narrative to grow Canada's commitments in support of NATO in terms of force structure and number of troops abroad. This translated to an increased commitment of troops to be stationed in Europe, to equal the equivalent of a division.

As Sean Maloney explains in *Learning To Love The Bomb*, later evolution of these talks points to an implied assessment by Canada that as nuclear weapons were developed and deployed in Europe (or in Canada) the Country would have no issue incorporating them either in their arsenal or acting a delivery vehicles as need be. As Andrew Richter points out in *Avoiding Armageddon*, Canada's previous collaboration on the Manhattan project, and its continued supply of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, implied that it was not a "nuclear virgin."<sup>47</sup> Expectations of joint collaboration with the United States in future defense matters also implied with it the joint use of nuclear weapons, if necessary.<sup>48</sup> Therefore already at the beginning of his tenure St Laurent had made his mind of finding no quarrels with arming the CAF with nuclear weapons, if available and needed.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> This act was also called the McMahon Act after Senator Brian McMahon who drafted it in 1945. In essence it severely limited the sharing of nuclear technology information from the United States to Canada and Britain. Maloney, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Richter, 18-25.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 55-58.

Charles Bohlen thus mentioned in *Witness to History* that “It was the Korean War and not World War II that made the United States a world military-political power.”<sup>50</sup> The same can be said of Canada based on the actions and initiatives of the St. Laurent government. The Cold War “changed the Soviet-American [NATO and Canadian] confrontation . . . from a systemic political competition into an ideologically driven, militarized contest that threatened the very survival of the globe.”<sup>51</sup>

For Canada, the Korean War involved sacrifice in money and blood, but the driving factor for Canadian participation was based on the strategic tradition of alliance warfare and a strong belief that the cohesion and legitimacy provided by the UN was paramount to deterring Soviet-backed communist expansionism. Canada’s military forces had been drawn down significantly over the past years and reorganized to follow force structure goals set forth by NATO.<sup>52</sup> Now the CAF embarked on a significant expansion of its land forces through the generation of a Special Task Force composed of volunteers.<sup>53</sup>

It is worth reiterating here that earlier, in 1947, when St. Laurent was still Secretary of State for External Affairs, but acting as Prime Minister in King’s absence, he had taken a perceptively distinct position with respect to the challenges in the Korean Peninsula. Both him and then Prime Minister King had supported the idea of leveraging

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<sup>50</sup> Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973), Introduction.

<sup>51</sup> McMahon, 58.

<sup>52</sup> Maloney, 19-25.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

the power of the UN. To do so, Mackenzie King had decided to take the rotating seat in the Security Council, vacated by Australia and assigned his next and younger “protégé” Lester B. Pearson to the position. However, in a decision that later created some animosity between St. Laurent and Mackenzie King, St. Laurent decided to support the UN, under US pressure, in supervising free elections in North and South Korea.<sup>54</sup> The division in opinion was coming from Mackenzie King’s concern that the situation in Korea could trigger a third world war, and him wanting Canada to have nothing to do with it.<sup>55</sup> That St. Laurent acted in such ways demonstrates most critically how his personal views on the need for interventionism on the world stage exceeded those of his predecessor.

When North Korea invaded South Korea on the 25th of June 1950, St. Laurent was Prime Minister, and Pearson his Secretary of State for External Affairs. By then the Canadian government had opposed the partition of Korea and had withdrawn from the UN Temporary Commission on Korea.<sup>56</sup> This had been necessary after the UN accepted separate elections for the southern part of the country. Nevertheless Canada still recognized the Republic of South Korea as an independent state. During this tense period, both statesmen worked hard lobbying the United States to respond to the situation through the legitimacy of a UN resolution, trying to avoid perceptions of neo-imperialism, but President Truman decided to act quickly without yet having formal UN backing in defense of the South Koreans. Through Pearson’s efforts, however, leveraging

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<sup>54</sup> Pickersgill, 23.

<sup>55</sup> Thomson, 217.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 221-225.

the absence of the Soviet delegation in the UN Security Council, UN Security Council Resolution 84 passed later in the same day supporting the US President's intent.<sup>57</sup> Canada's lobbying also set limited objectives to the military response by strongly advocating an international force to intervene, as opposed to a US-only force. In doing so it drew its military forces into the fight, and thus in the following months Canada mobilized a special task force for the effort, along with supporting Navy and Air Force troops. The Army elements were to see some the heaviest fighting in the next three years.

### Dealing with the nuclear threat

Despite having demonstrated the technical ability and knowledge to produce radioactive materials used in the atomic weapons, as well as having been contributed on some other more limited aspects in the production of US atomic bombs to end World War II, Canada did not endeavor to pursue the development of its own nuclear weapons until 1955. In these early years, Maloney argues that economic factors played a defining role in this decision.<sup>58</sup> Buckley supports this argument assessing that based on a \$2 billion price-tag on the Manhattan Project, which in itself had comprised extensive research in development to achieve its critical path towards ultimately creating the first bomb, Canada did have both the financial and technical ability to develop its own weapon, along with the required fissile materials.<sup>59</sup> However, he continues that such an

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<sup>57</sup> Security Council, United Nations. "United Nations Official Document-Security Council Resolution 84," Un.Org. Last modified 1950, accessed December 13, 2015, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/84\(1950\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/84(1950)).

<sup>58</sup> Maloney, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Buckley, 138.

investment would “have been seen by [the] citizens . . . as an enormous misallocation of scarce national resources.”<sup>60</sup>

At the strategic level, what prevented Canada from developing its own nuclear weapons is largely a function of Mackenzie King’s limited interest towards “[carving] out for a Canada a special place of influence in the councils of the great.”<sup>61</sup> Considerations of national prestige were also muted by the “very real gains in influence that Canada had made during the World War, [moving it] from quasi-colony to middle power.”<sup>62</sup>

Militarily, Canada maintained the conviction that the United States was poised to become the principal ally of Canada in the future, not only from the relationships forged in the last war, but also due to other strong diplomatic, economic and informational ties.<sup>63</sup> An impediment to Canadian participation on nuclear developments came from the United States in the form of the US Energy Act (or McMahon Act).

It is from the partial lifting of this Act, through the Canada-US nuclear information sharing agreement, that Canada had an opportunity to re-evaluate its potential acquisition of nuclear weapons.<sup>64</sup> The lift was part of an effort to reduce NATO’s forces dependence on the United States for deterrence, both conventional and nuclear. And therefore all NATO countries, including Canada, were soon to be expected

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<sup>60</sup> Maloney, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Greg Donaghy, *Canada and the Early Cold War, 1943-1957* ([Ottawa]: Ministère des affaires étrangères et du commerce international=Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1998), 94.

<sup>62</sup> Buckley, 131.

<sup>63</sup> Dyer, 274.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

of being nuclear capable to defend Europe.<sup>65</sup> Yet even at that moment, Maloney explains that St. Laurent's government remained relatively mute on any in-depth analysis. Even if the will and ability had been there for a national nuclear weapon production program, "it is probable that the Defence Review Board (DRB) figured that it would be cheaper to get them from the Americans."<sup>66</sup> As it will be discussed in chapter 3, Canada did in fact end up having access to tactical nuclear weapons from the United States for its troops in Europe, but only from the early 1960s to 1972, after the Cuban Missile Crisis political debacle discussed in chapter 5.

### A Soviet bomb

When the Soviet Union conducted its first nuclear weapons test, on August 29, 1949, it shook with it the Western hope of international peace and stability through the US atomic bomb "offset." At first the range of Soviet bombers was extremely limited, but within a few years technological improvements were expected to allow the Soviet Union to drop nuclear bombs over targets in Europe and North America.<sup>67</sup> This change in Soviet capability implied to non-nuclear European NATO countries and Canada a new dependence on the United States for nuclear deterrence, and for Canada specifically a new need for partnership for the specific purposes of defending the airspace over the North American Continent.

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<sup>65</sup> Maloney, 160.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>67</sup> Dwyer, 345.

## Containment

National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68) was a top secret American policy paper, presented to Truman in April 1950 but not signed until September. It is one of the most important documents on US Policy of the Cold War. It came to illustrate with exceptional clarity not only the US concerns of Communist expansionism, but also the United States' reliance on its alliances for its new strategy. NSC 68 reinforced the US policy of containment, a strategy which

seeks by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence and (4) in general, to foster the seed of destruction within the Soviet system that would bring the Kremlin at least to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.<sup>68</sup>

What St. Laurent' government resisted most in this strategy of containment was the concept of pre-emption or "first strike." "First strike" was a means to show resolve and method in the defense of NATO countries in Europe without the costs of maintaining in place the sort of conventional forces that existed at the end of World War II, and which would indeed have otherwise been required to act as a counter-balance to the exponential growth in Soviet conventional offensive power. Canada also argued that it was illogical to consider nuclear weapons as "just another weapon", since "a tactical strike would nullify the value of deterrence, rather forming the start of an escalation in itself."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, *A Report To The National Security Council - NSC 68* (Washington, DC: Truman Library, 1950, Declassified in 1975), 21.

<sup>69</sup> Richter, 61.

In the meantime, Canada had to balance US and NATO perspectives and priorities, most notably the dichotomy in European Nations not wanting to depend solely on the United States for their nuclear deterrence, and given that most NATO members were also not ready to invest in the level of forces that would compensate a move away from the theory of first strike deterrence. NATO's Military Committee (MC) 48 was chosen in 1954 as the first official NATO document to explicitly discuss the use of nuclear weapons. It introduced the concept of massive retaliation.<sup>70</sup> As Maloney put it, this strategy did not ostracize NATO nor the US, but supported both, especially within the context of air defense.<sup>71</sup> Canada embraced in most part the content of MC48, with some discussions between the departments of Defense and External Affairs, and it led to a continuation in the provision of strategic air capabilities to Europe, along with an Army brigade to Europe. Both were nuclear capable from design, and in the early 60s were actually equipped with tactical nuclear weapons.

#### Defending the continental airspace

The St. Laurent government took a proactive approach to the defense of the North American continent against the growing concern for Soviet long-range bombers equipped with nuclear bombs attacking from over the North Pole.<sup>72</sup> Most significant are the synergistic relationships that continued to be developed among Canadian scientific and defense communities with those of the United States. Both were hampered by the

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<sup>70</sup> Maloney, 42-47.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 19-25.

McMahon Act of 1945, but did resume after its progressive collapse in the 1950s. The catalyst towards Canadian proactivity in the defense of North America was the appreciation that any nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would now drag Canada with it, even if purely from its geographic position, whether it contributed or not to the fight. For a country and a political complex that had for the most part of forty years, and through two world wars, fought “à point serré” to sever assumptions of automatic complicity with one former empire, building another such dependence was fraught with social and political upheaval. For St. Laurent, still intent on foreign policies that did not interfere with domestic unity, this proved as an important challenge.

It was very difficult for the St. Laurent government to operationalize air defense plans for the North American Continent in the 1950s. First, they needed to understand the operational environment, which was both complex and included a significant amount of uncertainties. It is now known how his government and himself proceeded with the matter, but a method to reproduce their cognition is to define a center of gravity and greater objective through a critical capability, requirements and vulnerability analysis (see figure 1).

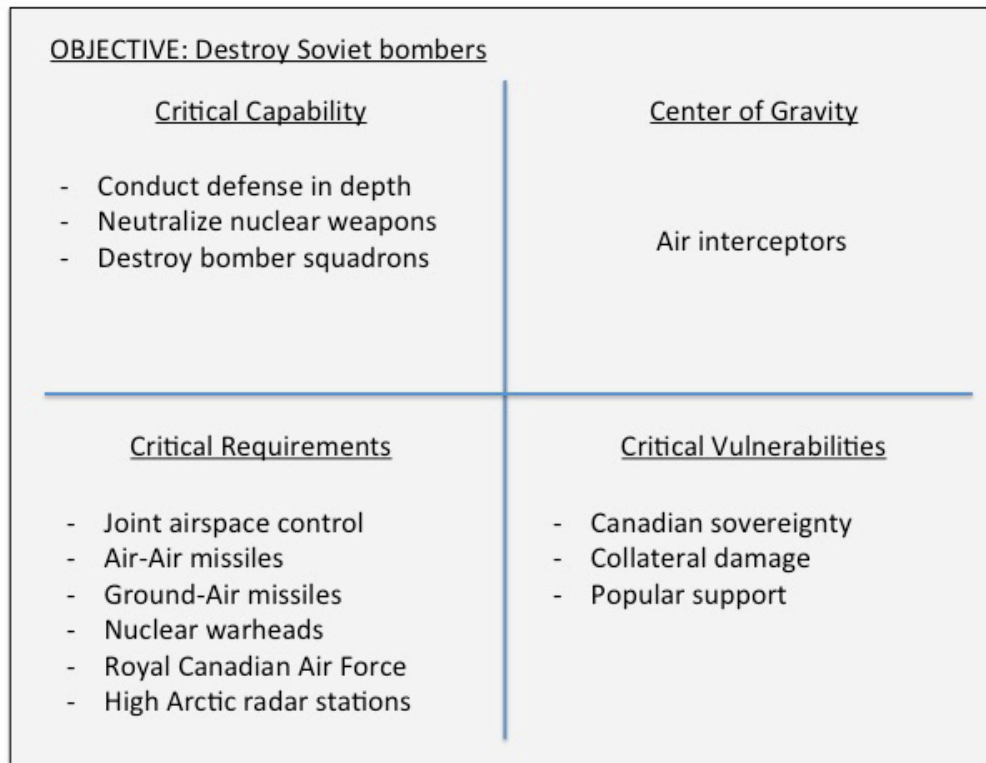


Figure 1. Critical factors analysis of the continental air defense situation in 1950

Source: Created by author.

#### Critical Capability 1: Conduct defense in depth

The early detection of Soviet bombers coming across the North Pole was an essential requirement to defend the continent. Early warning was desired in order to launch interceptors before enemy bombers reached major urban centers and critical military installations. This operational approach was dubbed “Defense in Depth.”<sup>73</sup> It is this approach that drove the development of the Arctic radar project, initially composed of the Pinetree Line, completed in 1954 along central and Eastern Canada-US border. It

<sup>73</sup> Rob de Wijk, *Flexibility in Response? Attempts to Construct Plausible Strategy for NATO, 1959-1989* (Proefschrift Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1989), 46.

was quickly improved by the construction of the Mid-Canada line along the 55th parallel, located further North, which operated only briefly in the 1950s. In 1957, a further Distant Early Warning Line, or “DEW Line,” was also constructed at the Northern most limits of the Continent, and some of these stations continue to be in use to this day as part of the North Warning System and NORAD.

There was also a more specific requirement to protect the major industrial zones of South-Eastern Canada and the North East of the United States, and most importantly the US nuclear capabilities under the Strategic Air Command (SAC). This was necessary to maintain second strike capabilities. It was therefore decided to install a system of ground-to-air missiles, the BOMARC, in both Ontario and Quebec. While this missile system was capable of using conventional warheads, St. Laurent’s government understood that its aim was to ultimately be equipped with the available nuclear warheads. The same cannot be said of the following government, that of John G. Diefenbaker, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### Critical Capability 2: Neutralize nuclear weapons

The shift to nuclear tipped air-to-air and ground-to-air weapons came from the understanding that even if just one plane carried a nuclear bomb in a squadron of Soviet bombers flying in formation, all of the planes absolutely had to be completely destroyed to manage the over-bearing risks of a nuclear strike on Canadian or US soil. Moreover, the warhead used would need to be powerful enough to neutralize any nuclear weapon in flight to mitigate any potential “dead-man’s switch,” that is a fuse set to detonate automatically in dropping altitude upon destruction of the carrying plane. It is these reasons that drove St. Laurent’ government to begin procedures to acquire the MB-1/Air-

2 Genie air-to-air nuclear capable missile, which started to be issued around 1962.<sup>74</sup> The potential use and destruction of nuclear weapons in mid-air over Canada also reinforced the concern for Canada becoming a nuclear no-man's land between the two giant powers. It became a catalyst for the birth of the anti-nuclear movement that St. Laurent's successor paid much attention.<sup>75</sup>

### Critical Capability 3: Destroy air bombers

The type of military aircraft was also to shift significantly during this period to support the changing requirements brought about by this new threat, in terms of range, speed and reliability, and with the new requirement to carry a nuclear tipped weapon. The solution to this issue became the famous CF-105 Av. Roe ARROW, or AVRO ARROW. The span of this project from 1948 to its ultimate cancellation in 1957 highlights some of the key differences in the leadership of St. Laurent and Diefenbaker on issues of operationalizing nuclear-related capabilities. For this reason, it will be further considered as a case study in chapter 4.

Beyond issues of interceptor capacity, nuclear tipped missiles and collateral damage, another critical challenge became the processes for coordinating operations over a joint airspace without sacrificing sovereignty. There was in Canada special concern to defining the authority for use of nuclear missiles with the “flexibility of employment of

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<sup>74</sup> The exact date of arrival of MB-1 Genie Nuclear Missile is not certain, however likely between 1959 and 1962. Maloney, 132.

<sup>75</sup> Erika Simpson, *NATO and the Bomb* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 105.

forces [required for] decisions necessitated by the tempo of the air battle.”<sup>76</sup> Canada did not see as acceptable a solution where the United States could single-handedly use nuclear missiles over Canadian sovereign territory. Conversely, the United States could not see as suitable the delays any joint consultation at the political level would incur. This issue played within the Canadian strategic tradition of maintaining relative military autonomy, and later became central to the establishment of NORAD.

Following the start of the Korean War, in 1950, St. Laurent approved the construction of a US military installation in Goose Bay, Labrador for use by Strategic Air Command (SAC). This agreement was reached in secret and did not permit the storage of any nuclear weapons on Canadian soil.<sup>77</sup> According to Denis Smith, however, it did allow SAC to temporarily store in Goose Bay nuclear weapons in transit to Europe as early as December 1950.<sup>78</sup> SAC was also allowed overflights of Canadian sovereign territory with the weapons, for these purposes. According to Maloney: “the crash of a B-36 and loss of its nuclear weapon over Canada in 1950 probably gave policy makers pause, but by June 1951 the two nations agreed that SAC overflights would be allowed on a case-by-case basis.”<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, the general secrecy of these measures contributed to St. Laurent not having to face the same public criticism and political pressures that his successor faced later.

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<sup>76</sup> Referring to Joint Research Board July 1954 proceedings, interpreted in Richter, 46.

<sup>77</sup> Maloney, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory* (Toronto: MacFarlane Walter and Ross, 1995), 178.

<sup>79</sup> Maloney, 13.

Some of the further complexities and uncertainties for St Laurent and his government to understand the operational environment of the early 1950s was further analyzed in Project LINCOLN, with a first version completed in 1953. This United States study identified four critical factors for the defense of North America: “The first was early warning derived from signals intelligence and other sources within the Soviet Union. The second was the effectiveness of SAC; that is, how much damage SAC bombers could produce against the Soviet bomber force before it took off. The third component was the early warning system. Fourth was the ability to disrupt an attack over North America, both at the area and point defense levels. Six hours warning was necessary from the initial penetration of the early warning system by the bombers to the time they had to be disrupted.”<sup>80</sup>

In concluding our analysis of the operating environment, it is therefore possible to observe that St. Laurent ignored some of the critical factors. However, John G. Diefenbaker did much worse, as will be discussed in later chapters. Most critically, nuclear warheads were not procured until 1963 (chapter 3), and were so acquired only after the John G. Diefenbaker floundered Canada’s response to the Cuban Missile Crisis and fell from government (chapter 5). Even the center of gravity, air interceptors, was almost scuttled with the cancellation of the A.V. Roe AVRO ARROW by John G. Diefenbaker (chapter 4).

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 26. This information is further sourced from: DGHIST, file 193.009 (D53), February 6, 1953, AVM Miller, “Project COUNTERCHANGE: Experimental Early Warning Radar Sites in the Arctic.”

### Leadership and sources of power

The best way to understand how St. Laurent had an impact on the history of nuclear weapons in Canada is to study his influence on related national affairs, within the context of personal power. More specifically, it is most pertinent to study his ability to use expert and referent power.

Based on Gary Yukl's work in *Leadership in Organizations*, expert power relates to the ability of an agent to influence his target from his task-specific knowledge and his general credibility as being a reliable source of information and advice.<sup>81</sup> Attributes such as technical knowledge, expertise and pertinent experience fall within this category.

From French and Raven in the same reference, referent power is rather "derived from the desire of others to please an agent toward whom they have strong feelings of affection, admiration, and loyalty."<sup>82</sup> Alternatively, he also describes referent power as a situation where "the target person complies because he/she admires or identifies with the agent and wants to gain the agent's approval."<sup>83</sup> A leader who is seen as honest, respectful, charismatic, open to new ideas and trusting of his subordinates will generally fall within this category. To excel in referent power, Yukl rightly suggests that "it ultimately depends on the agent's character and integrity."<sup>84</sup> Concepts of personal

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<sup>81</sup> Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2010), 161.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted from French and Raven, 1959, in Yukl, 160.

<sup>83</sup> Yukl, 154.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 160.

sacrifice and devotion to a shared objective or vision, based on shared values, are also a typical trait of a referential leader.

These attributes are contrasted with positional power, that is power obtained purely from the hierarchical position one holds in an organization or society. In this case positional power infers to the power vested in the office of the Prime Minister. In this case, St. Laurent clearly excelled at using personal power instead of the positional power coming inherently from his positions.

#### Expert power

Foundational to St. Laurent's expert power is the fact that he started his public life as a very successful minister of Justice, a field he knew well from his experience as a lawyer and head of his own firm. Such expert knowledge brought competence, which in turn inferred him expert power. One such example of St. Laurent's expert power is his management of the Igor Gouzenko affair as Minister of Justice before being Prime minister.

Igor Gouzenko was a Russian citizen working at the Russian Embassy in Ottawa who defected on September 5, 1945, and knocked at the door of government officials for asylum. Based on laws related to diplomatic relationships and immunity, St. Laurent advised PM Mackenzie King to refuse his request for asylum until his life was proven as being in danger. Such proof came later that night when Russian diplomats harboring diplomatic immunity ransacked his apartment, while he was hiding nearby with his family. Igor Gouzenko later informed the Canadian government on Soviet spying practices in the Western World and provided the names of many spies within nuclear research and production circles, including Britons, Canadians and Americans. One was a

minister in government. All were arrested and prosecuted.<sup>85</sup> What is important here is how this story highlights St. Laurent's preference of a deontological approach to problem solving, including in the context of moral dilemmas. Moreover, if the affair had been handled poorly, it could have tainted Canada's access to US nuclear technology and armament later.

Another aspect of St Laurent's expert power comes from his bilingualism and multicultural awareness. In Canada, bilingualism is a critical political requirement to bridge the communication gap between what has often been called "the two solitudes": French and English speaking Canadians. Such ability quickly expands into multicultural awareness as well, because the matter is more than language, of course, but of culture and understanding of the narrative that drive each "solitude" either towards or away from national unity. In fact, for Canada's Liberal ideology, multiculturalism was a driving factor for national unity. St. Laurent nurtured it at every possible occasion, allowing him the latitude to govern with frequent consensus even amidst the opposition, including on controversial issues associated with nuclear weapons such as a new interceptor, the BOMARC, early warning radars with the US, and the operational approach set out in MC48 in support of NATO.

Lastly, Thomson also commented that upon starting as minister of external affairs: "his subordinates were impressed by his ability to grasp the essentials of each subject they submitted to him."<sup>86</sup> St. Laurent was clearly very smart, and capable of understanding the complex operational environment of the 1950s. Such ability helped

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<sup>85</sup> Thomson, 182-184.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 202.

grant him the expert power needed to lead his teams and develop adequate operational plans. As will be discussed in chapter 3, the same cannot be said of his successor.

### Referential Power

As St. Laurent gained in experience and developed strong personal relationships within the government and abroad, he also grew in referential power. As Prime Minister, it defined his personality, and helped make him one of the most influential Canadians in history.

St. Laurent inspired his followers to emulate some of the best and most profound values of his political party and the Canadian population at large. Of course, one important aspect is the national unity he was instrumental in fostering between English and French Canada, which he cultivated through his perfect bilingualism and understanding of the various distinct points of view of the diverse Canadian identity. For example, in 1953, in a speech he made arguing for further strategic collaboration with the US rather than Britain he spoke in ways so acceptable to traditionalists that even John Diefenbaker, who spoke for the conservative opposition, called it “a most moving address.”<sup>87</sup> Of specific value was his reference that from “the unity that is provided by the Crown, there is no division . . . but a common devotion.”<sup>88</sup> He also made progress in controversial issues such as a new and distinct national flag, a first Canadian-born governor general, and a system of equalization between provinces in early 1957. In doing so he demonstrated again both his expert and referential power, the former in

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<sup>87</sup> Pickersgill, 39.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

understanding Canada's constitution and other pertinent laws, and the other in using his patience and leveraging his charisma to convince Canadians of his intentions.

Louis St. Laurent came to and stayed in government through a deep conviction in the need for good government and a strong dedication to public service. He did not do so from ambition, careerism, or other such egotistical reasons such as money or personal power. As a grandfather and the head of one of the most successful law firms of Quebec, a career in politics cost him greatly, both in terms of money and in separation from his family. In fact his financial woes had been exacerbated in the losses he had suffered in the great depression of the 1930s, yet he stayed in his lower paying job as a politician. As for family time, he only rarely went back home, rather choosing a small apartment in Ottawa where his wife joined him at times, but generally she stayed in Quebec City.

In fact it is true to say that Canada's Liberal Party wanted St. Laurent as their leader more than he wanted it himself. This started when Prime Minister Mackenzie King asked him to join his government as Justice Minister in the wartime government. His acceptance of a promotion to the foreign affairs portfolio also came about only after further personal appeals, as did his acceptance to the leadership of the Liberal party. For all of these jobs, he at once rejected personal gifts from wealthy donors to compensate his financial challenges, out of ethical concerns. He did later, as Prime Minister, accept such donations to erase some of his personal debts and increase his apartment's size by joining it to an adjacent one. Nevertheless, according to Yukl's model, these personal sacrifices undoubtedly contributed in accentuating St. Laurent's referential power.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Yukl, 161.

St. Laurent was also known for taking the time to listen seriously to the concerns and suggestions of his staff, as he did most expertly with Lester B. Pearson at the outset of the Korean War. He did not make rash, careless, or inconsistent statements the way Diefenbaker did. In nuclear weapons' affairs, his referential power translated in an ability to build the critical capabilities discussed earlier without the sort of national resistance that could have risen from distrust in government and prevented the implementation of his policies.

#### Leading in crisis: the Suez Canal

A way to further describe St. Laurent's personal power is to do a short case study on the Suez Canal Crisis. On October 29 1956, Israel invaded Eastern Egypt, influenced into such bold offensive action by a British and French coalition who joined the fight a few days later and took positions along the Suez Canal. Their concern was the erratic and opportunistic behavior of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, most notably in threatening increased tariffs and denying access to the Suez Canal.

St. Laurent and Pearson lobbied to make the issue a pressing matter within the UN, favoring a peaceful resolution through international diplomacy, but it presented a dilemma to St. Laurent. On the one hand, he could "call it like he saw it" and align himself against Great Britain, that is declaring it a post-imperialist and coercive action led by Britain against the fundamental rules of international law that drove the very existence of the UN. Conversely, the political opposition led by Diefenbaker was pressuring him to support Great Britain and consider the matter from a Royalist point of view. The latter was built on a narrative that the operation was a decisive military action by Great Britain

aimed at ensuring international freedom of trade routes (and securing their legitimate international assets) with maximum efficiency.

St. Laurent again chose the former, that is the deontological approach, which can be argued as being in line with his fundamental bias for the rule of law from his upbringing as a lawyer and prior tenure as Justice Minister. Had he chosen the latter, out of concern born from consequentialism, he may have spared himself and the Liberal party the sort of rhetoric from the opposition that eventually ousted him out of parliament at the following elections. However, St. Laurent valued justice before the sort of unity, driven in large part by strategically avoiding decisive issue, that had come to characterize his public service life. In other words, he put justice before self, alliances before party politics, and much because of that decision lost the following elections.

#### Conclusion: A visionary leader

Louis St. Laurent led Canada with a vision for a country strong through unity, acting for international peace and stability through, first and foremost, a proactive participation in alliances.<sup>90</sup> He was not respondent to Americanism nor Royalism: he embodied “Canadianism.” He also personified the thinking that “in international relations a state’s reputation is often acknowledged as a component of its power.”<sup>91</sup> Throughout his progression to high level positions in the Liberal government, as Minister of Justice in wartime and later Secretary of State in External Affairs, he leveraged with great success

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<sup>90</sup> Yukl loosely defines a vision as a picture of the future, framed by a value-based purpose, creating a path to drive behavior, change, and motivation. Within this model, and based on the historical events brought fourth in this study, it is easy to see how St. Laurent’s vision was of “textbook quality.” Yukl, 309-315.

<sup>91</sup> Buckley, 131.

the sort of expert power attributable to great legal knowledge, experience, bilingualism and multiculturalism. It comes to no surprise that in 1920 one of his first and most iconic speeches at the Bar Association of Quebec focused on the potential synergy of the federal and provincial legal jurisdictions in Canada and Quebec, which included an appeal for unity despite differences in religion and language.<sup>92</sup> When he ultimately reached the position of Prime Minister, St. Laurent became increasingly reliant on referential power, this time strengthened by the quality of his close team of advisors, which he listened to actively and led with great trust and deference, the most iconic of such relation being with future Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson.

The ambiguities of the national and strategic challenges that he faced as a Prime Minister cannot be understated. Evolutions in nuclear weapons technologies incurred equally complex evolutions in national strategies. As the leader of an emerging middle-power in a post war economy, the risks and opportunities were difficult to balance. Faced with the choice to develop a national nuclear arsenal, he rather chose to turn Canada into “the only country in the world with sizeable atomic energy establishments where no bombs are being made, and where all thinking and planning is focused on peacetime aspects.”<sup>93</sup> Nuclear related issues had to be managed in consideration for its closest geographical partner the United States, the old loyalties of the waning British Empire, the international legitimacy (and deficiencies) brought about by the UN, and the dilemmas of a nascent NATO. He succeeded in doing so thanks to very effective referential power and

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<sup>92</sup> Pickersgill, 11.

<sup>93</sup> Chalmers J. Mackenzie, “Where Are We In The Atomic Age?,” (Lecture, 1953).

his ability to build consensus. In many occasions, his government clearly defined Canada's point of view in international affairs, and work towards its achievement, to ultimately compromise for the greater good of alliances and to maintain the philosophy of avoiding divisive issues as long as they did not interfere with domestic interests. St Laurent also led out of a profound desire for service to his fellow citizen, at significant personal sacrifice, and with constancy to the proverbial vision he had defined as early as 1947.

In the end, the dominant impression one forms of Canada's early nuclear policy is of a series of adaptive responses to differing issues, hammered out as they arose, conditioned by the values, interests, and personalities of the participants, and bounded by an unstated—though well-grounded—sense of what the Canadian electorate would accept.<sup>94</sup>

Reflecting upon the dilemma of the Suez Canal Crisis, St. Laurent chose a solution based on international law and justice as allowed by the limited capabilities of the UN. He did so with great moral courage. The opposition seized on the public perception that he had let down Canada's traditional ally, Britain, in favor of what they considered neo-imperialism: a US-led United Nations intervention. The growth of the anti-nuclear movement contributed, along with other domestic issues, to a growth of political momentum in the opposition.

Now at the end of his political career, his opponents gained on him and his party from a storm of emotionally charged one-liners from their leader, John G. Diefenbaker. As chapter 3 will explain, these sorts of theatrics in debate came to characterize his later premiership. But on the 1957 elections to the conservative party, St. Laurent also left behind him some matters of nuclear weapons unfinished; most notably the establishment

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<sup>94</sup> Buckley, 140.

of joint control mechanisms for a nuclear-capable air defense operational approach. He also left on the chopping block of “quick gains”—that new governments often insist on to express change—the CF-105 AVRO Arrow, subject of chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER, 1957-1963

When he became prime minister in 1957, the country did not know him. When it came to know him and to experience his leadership, the country preferred the legend to the man.

— Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory*

#### Introduction

John George Diefenbaker's accounts of both his personal life and political career are filled with inconsistencies that have fueled criticism and controversies. Beyond the lies and exaggerations laid a man so blinded by his ego and personal ambitions he aged into premiership rather than growing in leadership. His tenure as Prime Minister, from 1957 to 1963, coincided with the most critical phase of the nuclear weapons venture, and as such acted as a canvas to illustrate his ineptitudes. In sum, it can be said that Diefenbaker faced important decisions by delaying, vacillating, and ultimately blaming others for his shortcomings. From his inability to demonstrate competence and build trust, he failed to exude personal power. Most critically, he did not define a unifying vision; "a picture of the future framed by value based purposes to drive behavior,"<sup>95</sup> for a nuclear-armed Canada.

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<sup>95</sup> Carey W. Walker and Matthew J. Bonnot, L100 lectures (Lecture, Department of Command and Leadership, Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, KS, August 2012 revised August 2015), provide this summative definition of a vision from the work of Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990), 192-195.

### “The Dief” or “Dief the Chief”

John George Diefenbaker was born on September 18, 1895 in southwestern Ontario, Canada. His father William Diefenbaker was a schoolteacher, and throughout most of his youth he led the family through an itinerant life, initially throughout various areas of Ontario. The family was poor, but ambitious and hard working. In 1905 the family set on a journey to establish a homestead in the North-West Territory, which shortly after became the province of Saskatchewan.<sup>96</sup> Their intent in settling in the West was to capitalize on the government’s promise of land ownership. These were extremely hard times to live in the Canadian prairies, most critically from the little government controls and guarantees for farmers against the inevitable fluctuations in crop prices and production. As John Hall Archer wrote in *Saskatchewan A History*, “homesteading was a gigantic gamble which the nation won, but which broke many an individual player.”<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, through incredibly harsh winters, difficult living conditions and great financial risks, his family endured.

Diefenbaker’s childhood experiences are often inconsistently reported. In his book *Rogue Tory*, Denis Smith makes great strides in differing facts from fiction. He describes a young Diefenbaker as an insecure young man with little talent for critical and creative thinking, or hard physical labor.<sup>98</sup> Most revealing perhaps of this early character is Smith’s suggestion that John’s mother Mary Diefenbaker was an example of a “dour,

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<sup>96</sup> John Hall Archer, *Saskatchewan, A History* (Saskatoon, Sask: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 127.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, 3-12.

intimidating, prejudiced, ignorant, and willful woman whose influence over her two sons was powerful and lifelong.”<sup>99</sup> On the positive side, however, he describes an extremely tenacious and ambitious young man.<sup>100</sup> In his memoirs, Diefenbaker claimed that already at six years old he was aiming to one day become Prime Minister, a claim Smith’s research supports.<sup>101</sup>

There are no great demonstrations of talent or skill in Diefenbaker’s youth. His only relevant educational influences were those of his parents and close family. Despite his German ancestry, Diefenbaker’s father was a staunch admirer of the British royalty, its Imperial ideals, and parliamentary traditions. Such loyalties were still shared by a large number of Canadians, as “the great majority of Canada’s eight million people were actually of British or French descent, and few English Canadian families had been in the country for more than two or three generations.”<sup>102</sup> Smith also describes how “from his father the boy absorbed a thoroughly whiggish sense of history as the progressive expansion of freedom, developing benevolently and inevitably under British law.”<sup>103</sup> Diefenbaker also describes himself in his memoirs *One Canada* as infatuated with the same admiration his father had for the French Canadian Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Liberal party of Canada and Prime Minister from 1896 to 1911.<sup>104</sup> This brings forth

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<sup>99</sup> Smith, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Dyer, 41.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, 3.

<sup>104</sup> John G Diefenbaker, *One Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), 7.

ambiguities in the political upbringing and early thinking of Diefenbaker, because contrary to ideals of British Imperialism, Sir Wilfrid Laurier's vision for Canada was distinctly progressive in matters of building a country autonomous from the British Empire.<sup>105</sup> As highlighted in chapter 2, it can be argued that his predecessor had done a masterful job at fulfilling Sir Wilfrid Laurier's vision, only actually being impeded by John G. Diefenbaker when leader of the opposition.

In studying Diefenbaker in national politics, it is possible to see how such ambiguity may have contributed to his inconsistent behavior. As discussed in chapter 2, he had, for example, taken a staunch Royalist point of view during the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 as leader of the opposition. However, this chapter will illustrate that in his first years of premiership, in matters of defense, he and his government took an approach that was very akin to that of the United States. Canada continued to work in coalition, bilaterally, multilaterally, or through NATO, in par with the strategic tradition of military alliances. Conversely, by the early 1960s and especially during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, his personal animosity with US President John F. Kennedy led him back to espousing preponderantly British perspectives.

As a teenager, in purposefully following his political heroes such as Wilfrid Laurier and Abraham Lincoln, he also set forth on two objectives: a mastery of public speaking and the law. As he later admitted, public speaking was a significant challenge, as his "diffidence and nervousness were hard to overcome."<sup>106</sup> Despite these challenges, through great tenacity, he continued throughout his youth and early professional life to

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<sup>105</sup> Dyer, 27-29.

<sup>106</sup> Diefenbaker, 97.

seize opportunities to improve those skills. When it came to the law, some challenges were equally difficult. Most curiously, he once “wasted” a year of schooling in failing an exam, from what he later claimed was an “over-dose of ice cream.”<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, on issues related to his legal education, he persevered just as well.

From 1912 to 1915, Diefenbaker studied arts at the undergraduate level at the University of Saskatchewan. He also held multiple jobs including distributing newspapers, becoming a commission salesman for John A. Hertel of Chicago selling encyclopedias door-to-door, working as a farm hand, and teaching in a rural school. Throughout this period, he continued to refine his public speaking skills, and started attending law classes. He did not have particularly good grades, explaining in his memoirs: “I was reluctant to accept unchallenged what I was told, and always wanted to follow propositions through to their logical conclusion.”<sup>108</sup> Denis Smith contests this assertion, noting that a review of his schoolwork reveals no insights of such critical thinking.<sup>109</sup> This chapter will also highlight that there is little of Diefenbaker’s actions with respect to defense and nuclear weapons matters that indicate much critical thinking. The fact that he did not prioritize the development of any of the capabilities in development speaks volumes, whether continental defense, NATO in Europe or otherwise.

There was, however, some demonstrations of creative thinking by Diefenbaker in school and during the rest of his life. In his second and third year he joined a mock

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<sup>107</sup> Smith, 12.

<sup>108</sup> Diefenbaker, 77-78.

<sup>109</sup> Smith, 19-20.

parliament as a conservative and leader of the opposition, still very much intent on using this experience to become Prime Minister.<sup>110</sup> In such functions, he was quoted in the university paper as “being particularly zealous.”<sup>111</sup> Elsewhere in the same paper he was imagined forty years on, in 1955, as “leader of the opposition in the Canadian House of Commons.”<sup>112</sup> As Diefenbaker later wrote: “it was in error by one year.”<sup>113</sup>

Diefenbaker received his nicknames “Dief,” “The Dief” and “Dief the Chief” through his various electoral campaigns in the Conservative Party. It was a mark of his imposing personality.

#### An inconsistent character

One revealing episode of Diefenbaker’s early character comes in studying his employment in the summer of 1914, when he secured a job as a schoolteacher despite lacking both the required experience and certificate. To mitigate these deficiencies, he offered to work for a fee lower than what was being offered, and got the job for a contract of seven months.<sup>114</sup> However, after teaching for five months of the seven-month contract, he made an unusual arrangement to delegate completion of the school term to his uncle Edward in order to return to university. What motivated him to quit may have been his failing to obtain his teacher’s license from the provincial inspector. At the time of the

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<sup>110</sup> Smith, 19-20.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Diefenbaker, 82-83.

<sup>114</sup> Dictionary of Canadian Biography. “Diefenbaker, John George,” accessed March 30, 2016, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/diefenbaker\\_john\\_george\\_20E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/diefenbaker_john_george_20E.html).

inspection, the latter had found him shooting gophers instead of tending to his students.<sup>115</sup> Subsequently Diefenbaker sought payment for what he claimed was a deficiency in his salary, a claim rejected by the school board and the Department of Education. It was a rather simple affair, however if considered from a perspective that this may have been a simple first trial with using the law, this episode shows a lack of skill. Most likely, however, his actions come to challenge his integrity and demonstrate lacking ethics and professionalism.

#### World War I records

Of all of Diefenbaker's personal life, no issue is as inconsistently reported than that of his military service during World War I. In March 1916, before completing his last year of undergraduate school, Diefenbaker volunteered for overseas service as an infantry officer. He later received his degree with two months *in absentia*. What came next in his short military service is a story of poorly documented medical deferments, for which accounts in his own memoirs are routinely inconsistent with those he made throughout the rest of his life.

If we are to believe Diefenbaker's own accounts as published in the written media, there are conflicting stories of how he may have been deployed to France, or not, and suffered a catastrophic non-combat related injury that required weeks, if not years, of treatment.<sup>116</sup> In his memoirs, he claims that while digging a very deep trench in training he was mistakenly thrown "a heavy entrenching tool, a combination shovel and a pick-

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<sup>115</sup> Diefenbaker, 81-82.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Charles Newman, *Renegade In Power* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 47.

axe, injuring his back and loosing a lot of blood.”<sup>117</sup> Curiously, he then goes on with saying that this injury “misaligned his heart,” which required surgery in 1920. In essence, he blames his inability for service on a physical injury sustained in training.

However, even his own narrative of his illness remained contradictory until the end of his life. For example, in his memoirs, he goes in explaining his need to be operated in 1920 in the same breath as he explains that in 1917 he had felt fit enough to request service in the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>118</sup> Continuing on the inconsistencies, his military diary contradicts the physical nature of his injury. In periods where he claimed being under intensive medical care in England (or France), he also documented outings as a tourist in London and sometimes multi-day passes to explore Britain and kindle friendships in Canada House.<sup>119</sup>

Through his detailed research, Smith builds a more convincing picture of the truth. He postulates that Diefenbaker knew that service in the Western Front at that time was synonymous with certain death, as Diefenbaker’s memoirs also support, and suffered a severe stress-related illness (most apparently both with mental and physical ramifications) when reaching the training camps in Britain. Despite the demand in manpower, military authorities were still not inclined to put what may have rather been perceived as inadequate and uncommitted leaders in charge of men on the front. After several inconsistently described episodes of illness that still allowed him to explore London, he was sent back to Canada. At the time, such illnesses were poorly

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<sup>117</sup> Diefenbaker, 83.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Smith, 25.

documented, but symptoms Diefenbaker recalled in the 1920s suggested a psychosomatic diagnosis, which are described by the University of Toronto as most likely being neurasthenia.<sup>120</sup> He later did in fact try to volunteer again in joining the much-hyped Royal Flying Corps, but was refused from having previously been declared medically unfit for duty, and not from still observed injuries. Point to case, he was shortly after refused any military pension for the illness, based on “no disability which was due to or was incurred during [his] military service” and sent a War Service Badge for “Service in England.”<sup>121</sup>

If this was to be the ultimate test of being “a man,” as the standards of the of the early twentieth century seemed to proposed, Diefenbaker failed. However, from modern recognition for psychosomatic stress, Diefenbaker “rebounded” with great resiliency.<sup>122</sup> This is an important point to consider, as it may have led Diefenbaker to view his own difficulties in politics and leadership as the same sort of challenge he had endured through resilience. His mechanisms for building resiliency involved creating for himself and others a false narrative preventing him from facing headfirst his own deficiencies. It is therefore quite possible he did the same when facing criticism and failures in politics.

In later years, such issues of courage and character were not raised in the political arena because his main competitor of the Liberal party, Lester B. Pearson, had undergone

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<sup>120</sup> Dictionary of Canadian Biography.

<sup>121</sup> Smith, 22-25.

<sup>122</sup> Joyce Dimarco and Richard McConnell, “Bouncing Back: How Are We Building Resilient Soldiers And Units?—Fires,” Readperiodicals.Com, Last modified 2011, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://www.readperiodicals.com/201101/2304324471.html>.

a very similar situation. The difference, however, is that Lester B. Pearson admitted to his fears and failures with much more candor in later years.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, both had much to loose in their courage being criticized in full view of the public, especially by a post World War II generation who's experience of war was not that of the atrocities of The Somme.

#### A distrust of generals

In *Learning to Love the Bomb*, Sean M. Maloney suggests that these contentions about Diefenbaker's war service may also have contributed to his often-strained relationship with his top generals.<sup>124</sup> To illustrate such distrust, Maloney relates how Diefenbaker once became very frustrated by having been sat between two non English-speaking dignitaries during a NATO meeting, which he referred to as "columns." He likely felt isolated, as the talks were tedious in their strategic implications and as such led by the top generals present. It is in these circumstances that he insisted on going home early, evidently flustered, and mentioned to a somewhat sympathetic General Foulkes then Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff: "I don't like generals . . . I don't like them. I don't like their thinking or anything else."<sup>125</sup> This event may be but an exception of limited contextual value, however a succession of other top CAF generals later commented on the challenges of working for Diefenbaker.<sup>126</sup> This could be interpreted as illustrating

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<sup>123</sup> Maloney, 105.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 105.

Diefenbaker's difficulties in managing his emotions, or simply demonstrating the kind of challenges in relationships between civilian masters and military leaders in modern democracies. However, when considering Diefenbaker's insecurities possibly born from his fraudulent war service claims, it has some merit as illustrating his distrust of the military establishment and of military matters at large.

### A political career thirty years in the making

After his war service, Diefenbaker navigated a cunning path towards an accelerated post-graduate education in law and a shortened apprenticeship period, leveraging year-long deferments for the war service he had not really done. On June 30, 1919 he opened a small law practice in the town of Wakaw, Saskatchewan. The next two decades saw him practice law mostly uneventfully and unremarkably in small communities of Saskatchewan. He did some cases in support of French speakers in Western Canada, helping him secure some respect as a defender of minorities.

Throughout these years, he continued to further his mastery of public speaking, developing what Peter C. Newman described in 1963 in *Renegade In Power: The Diefenbaker years* as “a carefully cultivated stage character . . . taking—and giving—great pleasure in the performance.”<sup>127</sup> It is from his great passion for debate and rhetoric that he started making a name for himself in the burgeoning progressive conservative political party. Lengthy debates were also a valuable part of his political belief system, as he illustrated in this quote in 1958 in the House of Commons: “Some hon. members will recall that in 1912 a very famous member from the city of Montreal

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<sup>127</sup> Peter Charles Newman, *Renegade In Power* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), ix.

spoke for 11 1/2 hours. Then he said, 'Mr. Speaker, I am coming to the essence of what I want to place before this house.' 'Those were the happy days.'"<sup>128</sup>

The speeches and argumentations that ultimately brought him to power were most frequently built on a narrative of himself a servant of "the common man," most notably farmers, working against an elitist and centrist government serving only the needs of the industrial center.

In terms of economic wealth, Diefenbaker's never amounted to surpassing by any margin that of Canada's middle class.<sup>129</sup> He endured the pitfalls of the great depression, barely. In fact during the crisis he claimed to have offered leniency of payments for his poorest clients, but Smith rather proved that he "pursued the collection of legal fees with great persistence in this period," again showing Diefenbaker as being very inconsistent.<sup>130</sup> To his credit, he avoided personnel associations with the Ku Klux Klan, which had a growing power base in western Canada and along with it with the support of some members of the conservative party.<sup>131</sup>

After over twenty years of effort, his first electoral win came in 1940 when he joined the House of Commons. He also continued to work towards securing the position of leader of the progressive conservative party, which he obtained in 1956. Such a long timeline demonstrates sheer determination. On his party winning the federal elections on

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<sup>128</sup> Diefenbaker mentioned this quote on August 4, 1958, in the House of Commons. Margaret Wente, *I Never Say Anything Provocative* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975).

<sup>129</sup> Newman, 201-203.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 53.

June 21, 1957, John G. Diefenbaker replaced St. Laurent as the leader of a minority government. A year later, he called snap elections and led the progressive conservative party to its first majority government in more than twenty-seven years. From his vigor in debate, he was preferred to a Liberal party increasingly being perceived as lackadaisical, much of it from St. Laurent's diminishing passion for politics.<sup>132</sup>

### His legacy

Diefenbaker shared the anti-communist view of his predecessor St. Laurent. He often called it "the red menace" using theatrical language typical of his "rococo style oratorio."<sup>133</sup> With it, he supported the need for the United States to counter the Soviet threat and was intent to actively support the efforts. However, there was a growing concern in Canada that the United States was infringing on Canadian autonomy in matters of economy and defense. In his first speech in the US on September 7 1957, he echoed what the Gordon Commission on Canada's economic prospects had identified the same year.<sup>134</sup> Diefenbaker mentioned "an intangible sense of disquiet in Canada over the political implications of large-scale and continuing external ownership and control of

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<sup>132</sup> Diefenbaker was the anti-thesis of St. Laurent. "He came [to politics] in the eyes of the electorate [bringing] a fresh fight to an otherwise stale and perceptively boring political landscape." Maloney, 107.

<sup>133</sup> Diefenbaker used this expression in a speech on the occasion of receiving an honorary degree from Dartmouth College. Smith, 261; Newman, x.

<sup>134</sup> Walter Gordon, "Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (1956-1957)," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified 2001, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/royal-commission-on-canadas-economic-prospects/>.

Canadian industries.”<sup>135</sup> As Smith explains, “more than sixty percent of Canadian manufacturing, mining, and oil production was owned in the United States, and most American-owned firms did not offer stock to Canadians. Yet Canadians expected American companies to serve Canadian interests and not to undermine Canadian independence.”<sup>136</sup> The pertinence of this concern of US infringement on Canadian autonomy relates to how it probably reinforced Diefenbaker’s perspective that allegiances with Great Britain were of more value, or less impactful on his populist-style politics, than those with the United States.

On matters of defense, what the United States might have perceived and “sold” as benevolence on matters of common national security, such as the construction of multiple early detection radar stations or a Strategic Air Command (SAC) base in Newfoundland, were to be equally perceived by some as American pressures on issues of national sovereignty. In consequence, while Diefenbaker no doubt believed in the need for American protection against the Soviet threat, he was initially intent on a good dose of political caution in any partnerships. Again, Diefenbaker was skeptical, even perhaps concerned, of the United States potentially trying to influence Canada’s popular opinion towards policy that were not his own. These were concerns affecting Canada’s strategic tradition of military autonomy. More perceptively, these defense matters, when combined with the economic matters expressed previously, threatened Diefenbaker’s conservative platform. He saw it as an attack on his ‘politics’ in the literal sense, challenging in the

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<sup>135</sup> Smith, 262.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

process his Royalist views. In fact, an issue central to such concerns of US infringement on Canada's strategic tradition of military autonomy was that of continental air defenses.

### Continental air defense

The operational environment described in figure 1 of chapter 2 had changed relatively little since 1948. By 1957 Continental air defense was the first strategically important issue the Diefenbaker government had to deal with. Since the beginning of the 1950s the RCAF and the United States Air Force (USAF) had been cordially collaborating in such endeavor. The first step towards a more formal agreement occurred through the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC), and in 1954 a combined planning group was established.<sup>137</sup> What was to become NORAD was recommended formally by the Joint Canadian-US Military Group in 1956, approved by the United States Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) in February 1957, and announced on August 1, 1957, two months after Diefenbaker's election.<sup>138</sup> Canada's demands were for a joint command structure that included political consultations with Canada's Government for any transit, transport or use of nuclear weapons over Canada's territory.

In 1957, therefore, Diefenbaker believed the NORAD issue had been sorted. For him, "the ultimate need for 'one air defense system' had always been understood."<sup>139</sup> However, hints of confusion over his understanding of continental air defense issues

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<sup>137</sup> Maloney, 31.

<sup>138</sup> Thomas A. Sturm, Command and Control for North American Air Defense, 1959-1963 (Report). Liaison Office, USAF History Division, January 1965, 14-7, cited by Schaffel, 251, 315.

<sup>139</sup> Richter, 40.

appeared in November 1957 in the House of Commons. The opposition began making accusations, feeding a new debate, fueled by Diefenbaker's decision to push ahead with NORAD without cabinet discussion. With little information having been shared in government and with the public, the Liberal opposition leader Lester B. Pearson started asking questions and Diefenbaker answered with generalities and rather inconclusively. His answers suggested that either he did not understand the issue, or he deliberately misled the Liberal party and the public. Most critically, he clumsily presented NORAD as part of NATO.<sup>140</sup>

What he presented was a strong link between NATO and NORAD, possibly attempting to make the issue more acceptable to a population already favorable to the former.<sup>141</sup> In fact, Maloney explains how both the Department of National Defense (DND) officials and Diefenbaker had considered with interest how NORAD could have been a sub-headquarters of NATO.<sup>142</sup> They had in fact been indirectly trying to influence the United States into expanding their desire to stockpile nuclear weapons in Europe into granting to NATO or other countries like Canada greater autonomy over their use.<sup>143</sup> In more details, Diefenbaker's government had once wanted to leverage NORAD within NATO to gain unilateral control over nuclear weapons. But Simpson suggests that this initiative had not been discussed directly with the United States, nor was there any

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<sup>140</sup> Smith, 293.

<sup>141</sup> H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 21.

<sup>142</sup> Maloney, 126-130.

<sup>143</sup> Simpson, 41-72.

indication that it had a chance to succeed.<sup>144</sup> In reality, it quickly died and left only the option of joint control mechanisms to be developed.<sup>145</sup> Yet what remains of this almost incredible proposition is how it seems to have confused Diefenbaker himself.

These ambiguities between NATO and NORAD sparked a wave of criticism of the Diefenbaker's government, led by the opposition. Beyond "party politics," this debate highlighted a general lack of understanding. Was there civilian control? Who had authority to launch? Was collateral damage of Canadian cities—possibly from atomic radiation—systematically considered in mission approval? All these questions had to be answered, and Diefenbaker himself did not know the answers. During the autumn of 1957 he personally confirmed with President Eisenhower that the use of NORAD required prior consultation with both governments. In the months to come, he did attempt to answer the questions asked, but never addressed issues of chain of command, the

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>145</sup> At that time the best description of what was probably meant by joint control is that of Dave McIntosh where "the United States President could authorize use of nuclear weapons in Canada, but Canada would determine whether these weapons would be fired. Canada by itself could not order the firing of a nuclear warhead but it could veto any such firing approved by the US." Dave McIntosh, "Four Year Debate On Canadian Nuclear Arms Stand Reviewed", *New Glasgow News* (Nova Scotia), 1962. This became the "two-key system" the US had for its weapons in the United Kingdom, but such joint control would only be arranged after the election of Lester B. Pearson to replace John G. Diefenbaker. In 1961, Diefenbaker's government also proposed another joint control mechanism called "missing parts", where essentially a key element making nuclear warheads fully serviceable would be held in the United States and both shipped and installed by American Forces in case of need. This proposal, however, never received the support of National Defense as it was deemed impracticable in any realistic situation imbued with some sense of 'nuclear-war-like' urgency. Simpson, 171.

extent of civil control, the units involved nor the potential loss of Canadian sovereignty involved.<sup>146</sup>

Peter Newman explains in *Renegade in Power* how the press seemed as confused as the government, while most of the population cared little of the issue as they still thought of nuclear weapons solely as the atomic bombs of the second world war or the larger but yet unlikely to be used thermonuclear weapons. Bold inferences were made from the language used in rhetoric, but not facts and explanations.<sup>147</sup> The delays and ambiguities did nothing to lessen the debate. Almost a year after the debate had started, in June 1958, the government presented this rationale for integrated air defenses in parliament:

The advent of nuclear weapons, the great improvements in the means of effecting their delivery, and the requirements of the air defence control systems demand rapid decisions to keep pace with the speed and tempo of technological development. To counter the threat and to achieve maximum effectiveness of the air defence system, defensive operations must commence as early as possible and enemy forces must be kept constantly engaged. Arrangements for the coordination of national plans requiring consultation between national commanders before implementation had become inadequate in the face of a possible sudden attack with little or no warning. It was essential, therefore, to have in existence in peacetime an organization, including the weapons, facilities and command structure which could operate at the outset of hostilities in accordance with a single air defence plan approved in advance by the national authorities.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Smith, 293.

<sup>147</sup> Newman, 60-66.

<sup>148</sup> Agreement between The Government of Canada and the Government of The United States of America concerning the Organization and Operation of the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD), Signed at Washington, May 12, 1958, John G. Diefenbaker Papers, Diefenbaker Center Archives, XII/21/A/556, 1-2.

Again this statement did not address specifics of the issues. And in answering follow-up questions, Diefenbaker again floundered. He once more erroneously insisted that NORAD was an outgrowth of the NATO chain of command involving no loss of sovereignty. In the same parliamentary session as he assured of no loss of Canadian sovereignty, he commented that no one had complained over such loss of sovereignty when Canada had surrendered full command of (conventional) air interceptors under NATO in Europe.<sup>149</sup> In other words, he both suggested that there was and wasn't a loss of sovereignty involved. Graciously, however, the leader of the opposition Lester B. Pearson agreed on the intent and value of NORAD, and on the possible sacrifices of sovereignty required for a joint force to defend the continent. By then it is most likely the Liberal opposition had received ample explanations from the government over the issues of continental air defense, and satisfied, it was now using it mostly to attack the Prime Minister.

Therefore, to the opposition, Diefenbaker's government had mishandled the process of approval itself, and possibly deliberately misinformed or mislead public opinion along with the opposition. It is not clear which of the two Diefenbaker is guilty of between a general lack of cognition in understanding the issue, or whether he deliberately meant to hold, delay, or mislead on information related to NORAD's joint controls. However, Diefenbaker later admitted having been very frustrated of what he called "leaks" that had emanated from his own cabinet, most specifically the Department of External Affairs (DEA) which had spurred the debate.<sup>150</sup> In such ways, he blamed

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<sup>149</sup> Smith, 296.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 256.

others, and in his anger began to muzzle his cabinet and put himself at the center of the government. Moreover, in the words of Maloney, this situation contributed to making Diefenbaker oversensitive to issues of sovereignty for the years to come.<sup>151</sup>

#### A.V. Roe (AVRO) CF-105 Arrow and/or BOMARC?

On February 20, 1959, after more than a year of hesitations, Diefenbaker cancelled Canada's production of the extremely advanced and ambitious CF-105 Av. Roe Arrow, which essentially was meant as Canada's first long-range supersonic interceptor capable of carrying air-to-air nuclear missiles.<sup>152</sup> The details of this termination provide exceptional insights into the leadership of both St. Laurent and Diefenbaker, and as such are the subject of the next chapter. In the same breath, however, he announced the acquisition of the ground-to-air Boeing Michigan Aeronautical Research Center (BOMARC) missile, which was also capable of carrying the same nuclear missiles, but over a much shorter distance and concentrated purely in the industrial center of the country. Doing both announcements in the same day became controversial, as the BOMARC was not meant to replace the Arrow, as in fact it could not.

Along with air interceptors, the BOMARC system was a constituent part of the Defence Research Board (DRB) layered concept, which was part of Canada's strategic plan in 1958, a plan that included both this capability and long-range interceptors equipped with air-to-air nuclear weapons. The intended role for the BOMARC is best

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<sup>151</sup> Maloney, 123.

<sup>152</sup> Sean M. Maloney, "Secrets of the Bomarc: Re-Examining Canada's Misunderstood Missile, Part 1," *The Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 3, no. 2 (2014): 33-43.

explained in the Canada-US Emergency Defence Plan Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) 300/9, which states: “To protect as much of the war making capability of Canada and the United States against air attack as is possible with the force available, [for] the protection of Strategic Air Command bases.”<sup>153</sup> In other words, the BOMARC was meant to protect the industrial center and Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases for a second strike capability.

In trying to understand the true impact of the cancellation of the Arrow and acquisition of the BOMARC system, it is useful to refer back to figure 1 of the precedent chapter. Such analysis shows how the cancellation of the Arrow left a hole in Canada’s strategic defense plan. Based on that analysis, the loss of the Arrow meant for Canada an inability to fully achieve a critical part that enabled its center of gravity, that is having air interceptors capable of fulfilling the critical requirements of delivering nuclear warheads. In return, such loss or critical requirements implies an inability to achieve the critical capability to destroy bomber squadrons and neutralize nuclear weapons. Most importantly, as a point defense system, the BOMARC could not replace it as a critical capability of “defense in depth.” Thus, again both air interceptors and point defense systems were required, working in synergy with early warning radar stations, and with using nuclear warheads to neutralize enemy nuclear weapons in the air. Therefore, the Arrow was more than a shiny and expensive plane.

Consequently, it can be said that the Arrow was the backbone of the Canadian strategy Diefenbaker failed to redefine and explain. In fact, he may very well never have

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<sup>153</sup> Director Military Operations and Plans (DMO&P), “Air Defence of North America,” Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH], December 19, 1957, file 112.3M2.009 (D208).

understood it. Some of the confusion probably came from the language used in many over-simplified explanations that can still be found in contemporary analysis of the public domain, which frequently described the BOMARC as a panacea of “point defense.”<sup>154</sup> The BOMARC could indeed be improved to become more effective than air interceptors to counter the threat of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) equipped with nuclear warheads. It could also address the capability to “destroy bomber squadrons,” as presented in figure 1 of chapter 2, which was still prevalent in the contemporary strategic environment of the late 1950s. But of course this explanation was incomplete, the limited range of the BOMARC in itself an impediment to its value if used independently to the Arrow. This is especially true of the BOMARC 1 version and consequentially Diefenbaker’s government actually lobbied the United States for better missiles.

When the decision to acquire the BOMARC was actually made in 1957, the United States was considering cancelling the project following near-disastrous tests.<sup>155</sup> They preferred the newly developed NIKE HERCULES and NIKE ZEUS ground-air missiles because they provided more flexibility in the type of nuclear warhead that could be carried.<sup>156</sup> Through Diefenbaker’s personal appeal to Eisenhower, as well as BOEING’s lobby in Washington, the United States did continue to the project.<sup>157</sup> However, in upgrading the weapon to a new improved version capable of intercepting

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<sup>154</sup> Maloney, “Secrets of the Bomarc: Re-Examining Canada's Misunderstood Missile, Part 1,” 36.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 33-43.

<sup>156</sup> Maloney, *Learning To Love The Bomb*, 148.

<sup>157</sup> Maloney, 146.

missiles, the BOMARC B, it also diminished the number of missiles it was ready to give to the Canadian government.<sup>158</sup>

From 1959 to 1962, Diefenbaker also continued to vacillate on whether or not to move ahead with the process to equip the BOMARC with the nuclear warheads. He was bowing under the pressure of anti-nuclear activists, some within his own government. Typical of his inconsistent and populist behavior, he then started leaving doubts linger in the public opinion and his government about whether the missile could or had been acquired with the intent to be nuclear-tipped in the first place. In *NATO and the Bomb, Canadian Defenders Confront Critics*, Erika Simpson explains that a parliamentary record of February 20, 1959, shows the Prime Minister clearly understood that BOMARC missiles were designed from the start to carry nuclear warheads.<sup>159</sup> However, in referring to a draft of a speech to the House of Commons dated November 16, 1963, Simpson also suggests Diefenbaker vehemently defended any such intent or even “having committed the government to acquiring nuclear weapons.”

In this context, Diefenbaker’s government did not move ahead with the acquisition of nuclear warheads for the BOMARC. After the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, discussed in chapter 5, this decision contributed to precipitating his fall from government. Indeed, during this crisis of October 1962, “fifty-six BOMARC missiles, guarding Canada’s industrial heartland, pointed at the sky, supposedly alerted but in reality unarmed and totally useless.”<sup>160</sup> In a similar fashion, he also delayed the

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<sup>158</sup> Simpson, 105.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 104-106.

<sup>160</sup> Newman, 341.

acquisition processes for tactical nuclear warheads for all other Army, Navy and Air Force requirements, even for weapon systems ubiquitously designed for such capability, like the BOMARC B was.

## Nuclear weapons for the Canadian Armed Forces

### Tactical nukes for the Army in Europe

Starting in 1957 through the Military Committee 70, Canada initiated talks within NATO and with the United States for the provision of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. It was aimed to fulfill the previously discussed NATO mandate to offset the disadvantageous force ratios against the Soviet Union.<sup>161</sup> Already in 1957 many such weapons had been tested and were in use by the United States, most generally at the Corps level.<sup>162</sup> Canada did not have a Corps in Europe, nor even the full Army division in Germany it had committed to NATO. In reality only one brigade was forward deployed in Germany on a permanent basis.

Based on this force structure, DND and the Army developed with much competence multiple options for acquiring tactical ground based nuclear weapons. The United States had at the time multiple weapons in various stages of development, with varying ranges and yield. Maloney describes in detail how the acquisition process evolved from considering multiple options. Canada was ultimately to settle, however, on the Honest John rocket system, based on NATO's push for standardization to this already

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<sup>161</sup> David N. Schwartz, *NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1983), 62-65.

<sup>162</sup> Jonathan M. House, *A Military History of the Cold War, 1944-1962* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 377-378.

proven weapon, having been deployed in Europe since 1954 by the United States.<sup>163</sup>

Honest John, which had been in service in Europe since 1954, was an unguided ground-to-ground truck-mounted artillery missile, using solid fuel, that could carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. On March 25, 1960, the cabinet approved the final proposal “probably because the nuclear capability was downplayed throughout the process.”<sup>164</sup> In September 1960, the Canadian Armed Forces received three batteries of Honest John, two went for training in Canada and the third battery deployed in Europe with a capacity for one hundred and fifteen rockets.<sup>165</sup> This number soon grew to four batteries deployed to West Germany, but the warheads remained conventional.

The fact that the Honest John system could also carry a conventional warhead seems to have played a central role in Diefenbaker’s decision. It allowed him to risk little in political capital. On one side NATO and Canada’s military were satisfied, the latter being able to train with the actual weapon, including specific training for the eventual acquisition of nuclear warheads. On the other side, the anti-nuclear popular movement was satisfied Canada was not yet committed on having nuclear weapons. Again, Diefenbaker delayed Canada’s nuclear weapons venture.

#### Tactical nukes for the Navy in the Atlantic

In a similarly apt process of study and comparisons of existing options, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) had developed in 1959 a comprehensive requirement statement

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<sup>163</sup> Maloney, 111.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 355-356.

for tactical nuclear weapons aimed primarily at anti-submarine warfare. This requirement paper had been done in close collaboration with the United States Navy, who was in fact ready to offer weapons to Canada.<sup>166</sup> However, Maloney explains that there was a significant lack of Naval strategy within NATO, as opposed to that of the land element previously discussed.<sup>167</sup> This situation contributed to Canada's government remaining undecided on the most significant issue: the storage of naval nuclear weapons in Canada. The United States Navy had by 1959 started building such infrastructure in United States territory, and was keen to have similar installation over Canadian waters, most specifically in the base of Argentia in Newfoundland. A nuclear weapons capable Canadian Navy would also require such installation. Obviously Canada overtly committing to becoming a nuclear power was again the issue.

Consequentially, the Navy did not get the go ahead to procure naval tactical nuclear weapons. It however made preparations and adjusted its launch platforms, on both its airframes and fleet, to carry US nuclear-tipped weapons. Therefore, like the Army in the same period, the Navy was left in 1960 with the ability to use nuclear weapons, but had access to none of the warheads.

#### Internal fighting

By the late 1950s the growth of the anti-nuclear movement in Canada got Diefenbaker concerned. As Richter explains, by 1957 "public concern over nuclear tests

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<sup>166</sup> Maloney, 163.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 349.

had reached unprecedented levels as a direct result of the massive tests that both the United States and Soviet Union had conducted.”<sup>168</sup>

On one side many have argued that he was overwhelmingly concerned based on his propensity to pay more attention to the personal letters he was receiving than to the science of polls.<sup>169</sup> Conversely, Diefenbaker also became heavily influenced by the anti-nuclear front following his own appointment of the staunch anti-nuclear politician Howard Green as Minister of the Department of External Affairs (DEA), in 1959. With this appointment Diefenbaker fostered further divisive views on nuclear weapons amongst his own team.

From this perspective, the focus of dissent was primarily focused on banning atmospheric testing, followed by proposals for a total testing ban, and in a lesser degree talks of support to bilateral disarmament between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Even before the arrival of Howard Green, DEA had expressed anti-nuclear views, but those had been tempered by its leaders, in a degree in response to the influence of National Defense and the ambiguous, but supportive, policies of Diefenbaker. In such an anti-nuclear paper titled “Nuclear Weapons—some Questions of Policy,” the department raised two very revealing questions: (1) “Were the issues that divided East and West sufficiently important to consider settling them by recourse to global nuclear war?” and (2) “Could policies that considered the possibility of nuclear war continue to be recommended by rational human beings?”<sup>170</sup> The paper did not answer those questions

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<sup>168</sup> Richter, 109.

<sup>169</sup> Smith, 93.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 96.

directly, but illustrated the department's point of view on Canada's nuclear weapons venture, a point of view now to grow even more.

From 1959 to 1962, Howard Green led his department with a vision of a Canada that did not have nuclear weapons and would lead the world in nuclear disarmament. Most specifically, in 1961, he even committed Canada to support in the UN the "Irish Resolution," calling on "all states, particularly the nuclear powers, to . . . refrain from transfer or acquisition of nuclear weapons."<sup>171</sup> This policy was clearly going against the previous efforts of the Canadian government, including many made by Diefenbaker himself with the United States and NATO.<sup>172</sup> It is unclear if Diefenbaker supported it. In sum, the Irish Resolution was aimed at universally stymying nuclear proliferation. These talks were also in addition to those the Department of External Affairs had been having since 1947 on global anti-nuclear initiatives. By 1962, however, such talks had been going for so long it is hard to understand how they could have still be used as anti-nuclear stalling of government affairs. As Newman explains, it was time for putting them in a category of "dead ends."<sup>173</sup> In any cases all these talks point to a clear consequence, by 1962 DEA had come to believe that "the acquisition of nuclear weapons was irreconcilable with the government's political interests at large and most specifically peace between East and West."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Alicia Goldberg, "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] Background," *Federation of American Scientists (FAS)*, last modified 2016, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://fas.org/nuke/control/npt/back.htm>.

<sup>172</sup> Maloney, 227-228.

<sup>173</sup> Newman, 351.

<sup>174</sup> Richter, 96.

Both Newman and Maloney suggest that such bold (and idealistic) initiatives were born out of Howard Green's desire for personal recognition.<sup>175</sup> They postulate that he was hopeful in becoming a prominent figure in a nuclear disarmament he felt sure to come. Potentially, he wished to emulate Lester B. Pearson's successes in the UN during the Suez Crisis, which had seen him receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.<sup>176</sup> It is not far-fetched to say the Diefenbaker may have associated with such idea as a way to bring grandeur to himself through his government and policies, however it is unknown if such ambition was as overtly discussed in government.

In any case Diefenbaker started giving more considerations to DEA's anti-nuclear point of view, which was also fed to him via the media and personal letters. As Simpson puts it, he "gradually changed from a Defender [of nuclear weapons] to a Critic."<sup>177</sup> However, he never fully embraced the latter. Instead, he grew increasingly inconsistent on his intents and commitments, much out of compromise for the work of the Department of National Defense (DND) with the United States and NATO.

During this same period of 1959 to 1962, DND continued its preparations in Canada and in Europe for the eventual acquisition of nuclear weapons. However, these efforts suffered greatly from the lack of direction and support from the Prime Minister. By sitting both for and against nuclear weapons, no coherent defense strategy was written. In a similar manner, the confusion on whether the CAF would become a nuclear power, or not, were leading critics to question connivance at the top echelons of both

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<sup>175</sup> Newman, 337.

<sup>176</sup> Maloney, 173.

<sup>177</sup> Simpson, 7.

militaries.<sup>178</sup> There was to be some truth to this following the appointment of Douglas Scott Harkness as Minister of National Defense in 1960. Through informal contacts in the United States military, he seemingly unilaterally pursued a policy of equipping and training the CAF in anticipation for their imminent granting of nuclear weapons.<sup>179</sup> These efforts were to last until February 1963, and undoubtedly saved Canada's military relationship with the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, Harkness submitted his resignation in protest of Diefenbaker's refusal to let the United States store nuclear weapons in Canada.<sup>180</sup>

From these extremely conflicting perspectives and many more conceptual and inter-personal quandaries, DEA and DND came to distrust each other and work in isolation, especially between 1960 and 1963. Diefenbaker did not take actions to solve this conflict occurring at the highest echelons of his government. For example, he could have made changes in personnel or defined a clear party line. Interestingly, Maloney explains that "Green was just as suspicious of military leaders (both Canadian and Americans) as Dief was and the two of them fed off to each other."<sup>181</sup> Consequently, it is apparent that Diefenbaker supported first and foremost the point of view of DEA, but understood that doing so alienated the United States and NATO. Testimonies collected by Smith and Maloney also suggests that the conflict led Diefenbaker to isolated himself, letting his department leads to fend for themselves without a coherent vision while he

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<sup>178</sup> Simpson, 115-118.

<sup>179</sup> Maloney, 202-222, 223-227.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 162-164.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 173.

attempted to make decisions with little counsel.<sup>182</sup> Already limited in his understanding of the nuclear issue, as illustrated by his inconsistencies over Canada's air defense challenges and the BOMARC, this isolation contributed to Diefenbaker's inability to understand, visualize and describe the environment, to use United States Army doctrinal terminology.<sup>183</sup> More than anything else, it is the DEA's dynamically opposite view on nuclear weapons that froze the CAF's nuclear venture at the pregnant stage. Diefenbaker's management of this divide in his government and its leverage to maintain ambiguity highlight his poor leadership, populist approach, and general indecisiveness. It fueled his inconsistent actions until his demise from politics.

#### Canada's NATO commitments

In 1967, journalist John Geller referred to Canada as being called "the midwife of NATO."<sup>184</sup> His opinion expressed the popular belief that Canada had been a highly committed participant in NATO since its inception. He added that Canada had "consistently pressed for a bigger and better alliance that would extend its influence and its direct activities into the political [and] economic fields."<sup>185</sup> Geller believed, as we can assume most Canadians did, that from 1948 well into the end of Diefenbaker's

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<sup>182</sup> Smith, 421-488; Maloney, 105-122.

<sup>183</sup> United States Department of the Army Headquarters, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: US Army, 2015).

<sup>184</sup> John Gellner, "Canada in NATO and NORAD," *Air University Review* (1967), accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1967/mar-apr/gellner.html>.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

government in 1963, Canada had always fulfilled its promises in terms of its military commitments, and that Canada generally wanted to do more, not less.<sup>186</sup> As explained in chapter 2, this was indeed the legacy of Louis St. Laurent. However, Diefenbaker did not achieve such resounding successes as his predecessor. Some of the guilt can be imparted on NATO itself and its insistence on yielding nuclear weapons to offset a lack of conventional forces. But Diefenbaker's vacillations on nuclear weapons also contributed to Canada struggling in its handling of nuclear weapons capability development in support of NATO from 1958 to 1963.

In fact, most significant was Canada's initial strong disapproval of NATO's nuclear first strike policies as enunciated in MC70.<sup>187</sup> From the strategic understanding brought about in large part by R.J. Sutherland, Canada's underlying belief was that any nuclear strike was likely to trigger automatic nuclear escalation.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, the anti-nuclear position held within the Department of External Affairs, and increasingly shared by the Prime Minister, undoubtedly contributed to such a point of view. However, in a bid to continue on the tradition initiated by St. Laurent to support NATO strength, Diefenbaker ultimately supported the essence of MC70. Beyond the nuclear first strike concept it introduced, MC70 also provided the force structure of the Canadian Armed Forces for the next decades. This is a rare case where Diefenbaker displayed some

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<sup>186</sup> John Gellner, "Canada in NATO and NORAD," *Air University Review* (1967), accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1967/mar-apr/gellner.html>.

<sup>187</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe History 1958 (SHAPE, 1958).

<sup>188</sup> Maloney, 12.

leadership, both in respecting the vision defined by St. Laurent on the importance of alliances over national self-interests, and in staying consistent with the CAF force structures.

As Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery explained in an interview as deputy SACEUR in 1957, to be part of NATO was now to support nuclear warfare: “I want to make it absolutely clear that we in Supreme High Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) are basing all our operational planning on using atomic and thermonuclear weapons in our defence. With us it is no longer ‘they may be used,’ it is very definitely ‘they will be used if we are attacked.’”<sup>189</sup>

Consequently, at the request of NATO, Diefenbaker approved the acquisition of nuclear capable F-104s for the RCAF in Europe (the Canadian version to be called CF-104 Starfighters). Diefenbaker also approved the RCAF adoption of a clear nuclear strike role. However, the lack of synchronicity of this promise and that of actually acquiring nuclear weapons (which were approved only in 1962) led to disastrous consequences in terms of strategic influence and operational capabilities.

First, in 1961, DEA’s support to the UN Irish Resolution had sent a confused message to NATO as to Canada’s actual intent in carrying its promise to field nuclear equipped interceptors. Much trust was lost and with it Canada’s influence. Most importantly, when the US doctrine of flexible response came into effect in 1962, the obtuse operational capabilities of the CF-104 almost automatically led to its operational ineffectiveness. In general terms, the doctrine of flexible response meant “a forward defense concept whereby the use of conventional land, sea, and air forces would be used.

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<sup>189</sup> Gellner, 162.

Should these forces-in-being be judged to be incapable of countering Warsaw Pact aggression, then tactical nuclear weapons would be used.”<sup>190</sup> For the CF-104, its short range and long runway requirements meant that it had to be based on highly developed infrastructure close to enemy lines, well within the latter’s immediate operational reach. In other words, it lacked the short-takeoff and long range high altitude capability that would make it survive even conventional first strikes (pre-emptive attacks) by the Soviet Union, allowing it to contribute to the US doctrines of flexible response, or NATO’s later second strike. Had the CF-105 A.V. Roe AVRO Arrow not been cancelled by Diefenbaker, Canada would not have had this problem. However, from a lack of option, Canada was left for many years to use the CF-104 Starfighter despite this strategic incoherence, at the dismay of the RCAF and NATO.

In retrospective, between 1957 and 1962 Diefenbaker delayed Canada’s ultimate relevance in a nuclear-armed NATO for the next government to truly establish. His increasingly anti-nuclear policies even alienated Canada’s credibility in the eyes of NATO, and his cancellation of the Arrow invalidated Canada’s operational approach in the eyes of NATO doctrine. To a certain extent, it also alienated Canada in the eyes of the United States, based on similar doctrinal arguments and actual capability deployment in the defense of Europe, but no so much as would do his disastrous relationship with US President John F. Kennedy.

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<sup>190</sup> Edward L. Rowny, “Decision-Making Process in NATO” (Ph.D Diss., University of Michigan, 1977), 178-179.

## Dealing with the United States

On July 1961 the United States considered the gapping hole in air-interception capabilities created by the cancellation of the CF-105 AVRO Arrow, albeit purely within the continental air defense domain, and stroke a deal with Canada. In exchange for essentially giving Canada 66 nuclear-capable F-101B (or Canadian designation CF-101 “Voodoo”) interceptors for purposes of continental defense, the United States requested Canada to finalize the Pinetree Radar line, another issue that the Diefenbaker government had delayed.<sup>191</sup> Dave McIntosh suggested in *Four-year Debate on Canadian Nuclear Arms Stand Reviewed* that in making the deal the United States also tried to force Canada into arming the planes with Genie nuclear warheads.<sup>192</sup> In other words, he proposed that the United States may have given those aircraft in the hopes that Canada would accept their carrying of nuclear weapons. It is a strong possibility, one which could have easily even been supported through the sort of extremely strong bilateral relationship Canada’s military still had with the United States, as the Department of Defense was growing extremely flustered at Diefenbaker’s delay on acquiring the warheads.<sup>193</sup> In any case, the deal was surely intent on making Canada more able to operationalize nuclear weapons for

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<sup>191</sup> In summary, the F-101B deal was complemented before final approval, on June 9, 1961, with the F-104G MAP arrangement. It allowed Canada to build, under license, 238 F-104 (called CF-104 in Canada) of different variants. Canada contributed \$50 million to this deal and committed to taking over eleven PINETREE sites, generating over 10000 jobs directly and indirectly for years. Simpson, 103-105. The United States contributed a remaining \$150 million, and provided support at extremely low cost. Maloney, 249.

<sup>192</sup> In Simpson, 106, referring to Dave McIntosh, *Four-year debate on Canadian Nuclear Arms Stand Reviewed*, *New Glasgow News* (Nova Scotia), December 1, 1962.

<sup>193</sup> Maloney, 232.

air defense purposes, at the expense of Diefenbaker's vacillation. In fact, Diefenbaker seemed to have sensed this intent, and decided to use it as leverage.

At the initial announcement of the agreement in 1961, Diefenbaker decided to equip the F-101B only with conventional weapons. However, as Simpson explains, he secretly continued to consider the issue for many more months, aiming to exploit US insistence on Canada's air forces being armed with nuclear weapons as leverage.<sup>194</sup> He also wanted to leave an opportunity open to, in the same manner, use US requests to store nuclear weapons in Canada (for the Air Force and the Navy).<sup>195</sup> In justifying such strategies to Arnold Heeney, Canada's ambassador to the United States, he reiterated his commitment to nuclear weapons as an ultimate objective. However, he also said he was ready to delay in order to avoid a public uproar. Here, Diefenbaker's delaying strategy, which now included opportunity for building leverage for use with the United States, illustrated once again that he was more concerned about public opinion and political support than Canada's nuclear defense strategy.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Simpson, 106.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Peter C. Newman was a journalist who following closely the Diefenbaker government during its tenure. In his 1963 work *Renegade in Power* he provides an uncorroborated story of how Diefenbaker believed Canada's public opinion was in majority against nuclear weapons simply from the letters he received. Newman, 340-342. Conversely, using surveys conducted during the late 1950s, Maloney rather postulates that the population was in majority supportive of Canada acquiring nuclear weapons, especially with respect to continental defense issues. Maloney, 260

### A distrust of President John F. Kennedy

As discussed in the previous chapter, Diefenbaker's predispositions against Americans were not the most positive in 1961. The Gordon commission had unveiled only recently an unjustified imbalance of trade with the United States, and the debate on air defenses had left Diefenbaker overtly concerned over issues of sovereignty. At two occasions in 1961 and 1962, Diefenbaker met John F. Kennedy to discuss a variety of national issues, of most importance that of joint control of nuclear warheads. Diefenbaker considered those meetings important, especially considering the value he placed on personal diplomacy. However, their personal animosity, much to the fault of Diefenbaker, quickly marred Canada-United States relations.

These animosities began in earnest in 1961 when Kennedy visited Diefenbaker in Canada. Just as he debarked the plane, Diefenbaker was particularly embarrassed at Kennedy's use of the French language in addressing the press, which was obviously much better than his own.<sup>197</sup> Their personalities and background also had little in common. In referring to Knowlton Nash in *Kennedy and Diefenbaker*, Maloney explains:

Diefenbaker had an obsessive dislike of Americans and feared rejection by Kennedy, while Kennedy had a complete lack of knowledge and interest in Canada and feared failure. Diefenbaker was an 'aging suspicious prairie populist,' and Kennedy was a 'youthful, quick-witted Boston sophisticate.' Kennedy was 'a real masquerading as a romantic,' while Diefenbaker was a 'messianic nationalist.'<sup>198</sup>

There is however a particular incident during that visit that made their relationship suffer. This incident relates to Diefenbaker's aide finding a note left by Kennedy's staff

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<sup>197</sup> Smith, 360.

<sup>198</sup> Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker* (Toronto, Ont.: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 11-13.

in a trash can after a meeting with Diefenbaker with diplomatic notes to “push Canada for” and possibly the letters “SOB” written beside Diefenbaker’s name.<sup>199</sup> The term “to push” has a different meaning in Canadian English than in American language, with Canadians more inclined to use the word “press” when trying to convey issues of most importance. To use the word “push” in Canadian English was more akin to blackmail or coercion. But Diefenbaker ignored this perspective and took great affront in the US President perceptively trying to “shove” its policy down on Canada’s throat.<sup>200</sup> This incident also comes to illustrate well that for Diefenbaker, any potential allusion to diminishing his spirit of grandeur was seen as a personal attack. And in later years he was to use this incident again, this time overtly against Kennedy, as chapter 5 will highlight.

#### Leadership and sources of power

In a manner quite opposite to that of Louis St. Laurent, Diefenbaker did not succeed in leveraging what Yukl defines as personal power.<sup>201</sup> Many had thought very highly of him and his ability for rhetoric as the leader of the opposition, some even growing in reverence towards him, but this shallow reverence had emerged at a time when there was little expectation for his theatrical language to be more about stimulating rationalism than emotions.

During the 1957 elections, such limitations had played into the hand of Diefenbaker in using what Roy F. Baumeister and Brad J. Bushman describe in *Social*

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<sup>199</sup> Smith, 360.

<sup>200</sup> Maloney, 249.

<sup>201</sup> Yukl, 154-155.

*Psychology and Human Nature* as the peripheral route to persuasion. As opposed to a route or persuasion based on “appealing to conscious rational deliberate processing, [to] enlightened self-interest,”<sup>202</sup> he had leveraged a method of winning the vote of the electorate based on “activating automatic responses, [to] motivations or responses that may not be fully understood.”<sup>203</sup> As Baumeister and Bushman conceptualized, such an approach had been successful during the election, but did nothing to grow his personal power beyond the simple fact of having won a federal election. At the root of his lack of personal power two ingredients were to remain missing: credibility and trust.

#### Lack of credibility

Diefenbaker does not stand out, in the history of Canada’s Prime Ministers, as being particularly more or less educated than others. He was certainly less successful in law than his predecessor had been. His overall career achievements are particularly dismal. His war service inconsistencies, limited successes as a small-town lawyer, decades of failures in gaining a public office, and focus on theatrical as opposed to cognitive analysis and substance had, by the time of his election, built a Diefenbaker that attracted believability as a leader only through an alternate route of persuasion. As Smith explains, “Diefenbaker “forcibly impressed” himself on his audiences. His impact was made not by extended discussion of complex issues, but by his urgency and zeal, his appeals to national greatness and common sacrifice, his promise of deliverance.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Roy F. Baumeister, *Social Psychology and Human Nature* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2014), 291.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Smith, 232.

Diefenbaker's difficulties to visualize and describe complex situations coherently, and make decisions, were also increasingly observed throughout his career. These deficiencies can be associated with his inability to learn complex issues, and in return contributed to his lack of credibility. As Joseph Nye Jr comments:

Simple learning uses new information merely to adapt the means, without altering any deeper goals. Complex learning, by contrast, involves recognition of conflicts among means and goals in causally complicated situations, and leads to new priorities and trade-offs. Simple learning is relatively easy for an observer to assess, but complex learning is often more elusive, particularly when changes in deeper goals may have occurred.<sup>205</sup>

One such early example is his ridiculous litigation to have a retroactive increase in pay, that for a teacher appointment he was likely forced to relinquish out of incompetence. His cancellation of the AVRO Arrow aerospace project provides an exception in him being a credible force in cutting governmental expenses, as he had promised during the electoral run. However, as chapter 4 explains, the way he proceeded demonstrated poor strategic communication skills, and in turn drastically affect his credibility as a leader in business development.

Most critically, he most famously blundered on understanding that the second version of the BOMARC system (the BOMARC B) he lobbied the United States to provide was only capable of delivering nuclear warheads. They did not have conventional capabilities, yet he stubbornly continued to argue otherwise, admittedly quite vaguely. In fact he argued confidently enough to maintain a popular perception that he had not committed Canada to having nuclear weapons as part of its defense strategy. And he also continued to put the remaining weight of his credibility on this narrative at a time when

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<sup>205</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Nuclear Learning and US-Soviet Security Regimes," *International Organization* 4, no. 3 (1987): 380.

the Canadian Forces were making sure all their platforms could carry nuclear weapons, in support of NATO commitments he himself made.

Diefenbaker's credibility was also exacerbated by his insecurities and difficult character. He was a Prime Minister incapable to get along with a US President from purely personal perspectives, not national policies. In wanting to stand at the center of diplomacy, through what he called "personal diplomacy," he made diplomacy about him, and it turned ugly. Ugly enough to, after the debacle of the Cuban Missile Crisis in chapter 5, prove beyond any doubt his inability to lead the country.

#### Lack of trust

In terms of building trust, Diefenbaker's inconsistent character was a significant hurdle, as it led him to vacillate tediously on critical decisions, and he sometimes did so directly blaming his subordinates for their inefficiencies. An example of such character is his poor strategic communication in agreeing to NORAD. He spent months alleging of a relationship between NORAD and NATO to appease tensions he apprehended, in true populist manner. And when the crisis resorbed itself, he blamed his cabinet for having leaked information before he had been prepared to do so. In doing so, and not taking responsibility for his own shortcomings in understanding and describing the issue with honesty, he lost trust from his subordinates. He should have listened to the advice of his subordinates from the Department of Defense, as they would have informed him adequately of the fallacy of this relationship.

Diefenbaker was naturally critical of most advice he was given even in the best of circumstances, so when issues were so complex he could not understand them, or when the advice received were contradictory, this was a potent recipe of indecision. Air Chief

Marshal Miller once described that he “was not a man who trusts experts of any color in fields that he himself [did] not know much about.”<sup>206</sup>

A similar observation can be made from his mismanagement of the rift between External Affairs and the Defense Department. In this case Diefenbaker progressively isolate himself, and of the little decisions he made, those he did were most often communicated without coherent and constructive debate. Point to case, he supported anti-nuclear talks, to include the Irish resolution, at the same time as he supported Canada’s Army and Air Force getting ready to be equipped with delivery systems deliberately intended to carry nuclear warheads. Three other major issues most critically inform this judgment: Diefenbaker’s early mismanagement of the continental air defense program in 1958, the AVRO ARROW cancellation and acquisition of the BOMARC, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Evidently, leadership through compliance, as opposed to commitment, is not a good recipe. This is especially through when there is no consistent direction for such compliant followers to adhere to.

### Conclusion: lacking a vision

As introduced in chapter 2, the term “vision” has been defined every which way in political circles, and it remains an elusive concept often used to put a theatrical “grandeur” to an accepted responsibility that have leaders in giving direction to an organization. Described this way, however, a “vision” is more of a “mission statement.” In the fuller context of leadership, a vision is “a picture of the future framed by value

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<sup>206</sup> National Archives of Canada, *The RCAF Position in Relation to Continental Air Defense*, RG 24 vol 1. 17828 file 840-1050012, AOC Conference, January 1955.

based purposes to drive behavior.”<sup>207</sup> It brings about the revered synergy an organization requires to excel above others. As Peter M. Senge explains in *The Fifth Discipline*, a shared and powerful vision is also not so much what the leader defines as such, but rather the interlocking parts of each of the organization member’s perspective of the future as it relates to what they are inclined on accomplishing. The vision acts as a focused energy that drives the constituent parts of a system to work together in achieving an effect greater than what could be done by the sum of its parts.

While an organizational vision is the product of shared perspectives, and consequently shared values, the leader’s values play a critical role. In the case of Diefenbaker, this came as a handicap from the start, as his own values were largely in conflict with the mass of the electorate. He masked his cowardice in war with a resilience born out of self-aggrandizement and self-preservation, as if by lying to himself he could lie to others, but undoubtedly this contributed to grow his insecurities and fear of further failure. From his general insecurity and such experiences, along with heavy criticism early in his tenure in cancelling the AVRO Arrow, he came to value Populism as a central element to his premiership. Attempting to please everybody, he therefore grew in his inconsistent behavior.

Diefenbaker was also a Royalist from afar that followed an era of internationalism from within. These perspective implied a clash of values, most notably that of tradition versus progressive policies. On nuclear weapons affairs he therefore wasn’t ready to sacrifice Canada’s hard won strategic tradition of military autonomy over the altar of a

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<sup>207</sup> Walker and Bonnot, L100 lectures, provide this summative definition of a vision from the work of Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 191-195.

continental air defense program, if the latter included nuclear weapons capabilities he could not fully command and control. But when he was actually presented such options, he failed to seize the opportunity because by then he also valued the anti-nuclear views proposed by his Department of External Affairs.

Diefenbaker's tenure as Prime Minister is also a textbook illustration of how the lack of any vision can impact the long-term survival of an organization, let alone helping it achieve synergies. On issues of nuclear weapons, had he led his government in defining a shared vision and help see it through, it could have brought about much needed collaboration—and perhaps synergy—between External Affairs and the Defense Department. A vision for a nuclear-armed Canada could have saved the AVRO Arrow. It could have saved Diefenbaker the grief of justifying the nuclear-tipped BOMARC B, or communicated the need for the anti-nuclear head of the DEA Howard Green to either get on board or leave. In terms of his leadership, it may have saved his credibility as a leader concerned with its defense strategy, as opposed to a leader concerned only of the public opinion. It certainly could have helped him gain trust within his government as a leader who supported their work, at least as it complied to his vision. Put simply, such shared vision could have led to a coherent development of Canada's nuclear weapons arsenal along with its national and foreign policies. It is quite possible that in such context Canadians may even have forgiven Diefenbaker's very ugly personal diplomacy with John F. Kennedy, as it would not have played out in full force as it did in the Cuban Missile Crisis (chapter 5). However, such vision was not defined, and Diefenbaker's tenure ended up being just about only a pause in Canada's Nuclear Venture, from 1957 to 1963.

## CHAPTER 4

### DIEFENBAKER AND THE CF-105 AVRO ARROW

Some people talk about courage. Well, we took a stand in reference to the 'Arrow.' No one wanted to take that stand.... As I look back on it, I think it was one of the decisions that was right. Here was an instrument beautiful in appearance, powerful, a tribute to Canadian production . . . . This instrument that was otherwise beautiful, magnificent in its concept, would have contributed little, in the changing order of things, to our national defence.

— John G. Diefenbaker, House of Commons, January 25, 1963.

#### Introduction

One particularly relevant manner in which we can further study the leadership of John G. Diefenbaker with respect to Canada's nuclear weapons venture is to consider how he managed the CF-105 A.V. Roe (AVRO) ARROW aircraft acquisition project. It was initially Louis St. Laurent who initiated this project, but John G. Diefenbaker cancelled it shortly after being elected Prime Minister.

When John G. Diefenbaker was elected as Prime Minister in 1957, the time had come for Canada to deliver on the promises made by the previous government to contribute to the North American Continental Defense program. These included improvements to early warning radar systems, the basing of US nuclear-capable long-range bombers on Canadian soil with overflight rights, the conclusion of the NORAD command and control architecture, the nuclear arming of BOMARC ground-to-air missiles, and the adoption of supersonic interceptors capable of using nuclear missiles.

However, a critical shift was also underway in defense strategy, driven in large part by the Soviet development of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in 1957 and continued discussions on US National Security Council (NSC) Resolution 162/2

from 1953. This document stated that “in the face of Soviet atomic power, defense of the continental United States becomes vital to effective security: to protect our striking force, our mobilization base, and our people.”<sup>208</sup> To add to all the tensions in this complex system of competing priorities, of most concern to the newly elected conservative government were issues of expenditure controls.<sup>209</sup> As it was noted by Canada’s Chief of the Air Staff later, “they came in with an avowed intention of cutting military expenses and raising old age pensions, etc. and it all costs money.”<sup>210</sup>

This period of upmost complexity in Canada’s strategic environment also coincided with the election of one of its most inept Prime Ministers, and of many defense related debacles to come one of those who raised the most passions became the cancellation of the A.V. Roe (AVRO) ARROW CF-105 air interceptor.

#### The AVRO ARROW project

In 1953, two converging developments led Canada to begin development of the AVRO ARROW, a plane intent on being Canada’s “first domestically designed and built nuclear delivery system.”<sup>211</sup> On one side, Canada was emboldened by having acquired a solid tradition of aerospace innovation, most notably from the successes of the Canadian

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<sup>208</sup> NSC 162/2, Executive Secretary on United States objectives and Programs For National Security, *A Report To The National Security Council* (Washington, DC: The White House, 1953).

<sup>209</sup> Smith, 307.

<sup>210</sup> Maloney, 158. Referring to DGHIST, volume 73/1223 file 2002, Air Officers Commanding Conference, March 1958, Campbell discussion.

<sup>211</sup> Donald C. Story and Russell Isinger, “The Origins of the Cancellation of Canada's Avro CF-105 Arrow Fighter Program: A Failure of Strategy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007): 1025.

built Av. Roe (AVRO) CF-100, which was often the only short-takeoff low-visibility all-weather jet interceptor available to NATO in Europe in the early 1950s.<sup>212</sup> Congregating towards this idea was also the notion that air forces were increasingly perceived as “a”—or sometimes “the”—decisive tool in military arsenals.<sup>213</sup> This criticality was amplified both by their necessity as a delivery vehicle for nuclear warheads and in the early 1950s by their expected use as air-air interceptors equipped with nuclear missiles for the defense of the North American Continent. For such reason, following the Korean War rearmament of 1950-1951, the RCAF was receiving half of the defense budget, which in 1952 was already half of the total national budget.<sup>214</sup> Undeniably, the RCAF was going through a “Golden Age.”<sup>215</sup>

It therefore should come at no surprise that, when considering a replacement aircraft for the aging CF-100, the RCAF focused on the extremely ambitious AVRO ARROW, arguing that despite the costs, it was the only way to meet Canada’s unique defense requirement.<sup>216</sup> A supporting argument was the lingering frustration about Canada not having been able to secure Canadian-manufactured Hurricane aircraft for its

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 1027.

<sup>213</sup> Gerald Bowman, *La Guerre dans les Airs* (London: Evans Bros, 1956), 305-306.

<sup>214</sup> Story and Isinger, 1029.

<sup>215</sup> Brereton Greenhous and Hugh A Halliday, *Canada's Air Forces, 1914-1999* (Montréal: Art Global, 1999), 133.

<sup>216</sup> The RCAF wanted a pioneering plane largely ahead of its time and of unequalled abilities, “a twin-engine, two-seat aircraft, with a combat speed of Mach 1.5 at a combat altitude of 50,000 feet, and a combat radius of action of 200 nautical miles. Story and Isinger, 1028.

own defense in the last war.<sup>217</sup> In the process, the RCAF also advocated that the project helped maintain Canada's edge in aerospace technology and that the project did not compare to others in development elsewhere, assessing it as being two to three years ahead of the rest of the world at the time.<sup>218</sup> Armed with such "ends, ways, and means," Chief of the Air Staff C. Roy Slemon easily gained support with the key members of the government: chairman of the Defense Research Board Dr O.M. Solandt, Minister of Defense Production Minister C. D. Howe, and ultimately with the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) Gen Foulkes.<sup>219</sup> Of importance, however, was that this support was based on the criteria that all costs be absorbed in the normal operating budget of the RCAF, a promise that was not kept.

#### Developments in technology

One of the most significant hurdles to the development of the CF-105 came from the shift in strategic thinking brought about by the development of ICBMs by the Soviet Union in 1957. The threat of long-range bombers piercing the Arctic to drop nuclear bombs in North America was expected to be either preceded or superseded by that of nuclear-tipped ICBMs, and the latter could be better intercepted using ground-to-air missiles than by air-air missiles carried by interceptor aircraft. In the United States, this situation led in part to the development of the BOMARC ground-to-air nuclear tipped

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<sup>217</sup> Greig Stewart, *Shutting Down the National Dream* (Toronto, Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988), 62.

<sup>218</sup> Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), *Minutes Of The 545Th Meeting Of The Chiefs Of Staff Committee* (Ottawa: COSC Papers, 1953).

<sup>219</sup> Douglas L. Bland, *The Administration of Defense Policy in Canada 1947 to 1985* (Kingston, ON: Ronald P. Frye, 1987), 151-152.

missile, and with it came pressures for Canada to also adopt such technology in support of the forward-defense of the industrial North East.<sup>220</sup>

### Project management challenges

Another hurdle to CF-105 development came from its ambitious nature. Not only was it a new airframe that needed to survive the structural torsions of supersonic speeds, but it involved at first the indigenous development of new and advanced radar, fire control systems, engines, and air-air missiles. The government expressed much concerns, first on the actual competence of A. V. Roe to develop the new airframe, and later on the challenges of having the other components produced by various subsidiaries across Canada, as it added significant complexities in components integration, timeline management, and undoubtedly contributed to costs spiraling upwards.<sup>221</sup> At project inception, such ambitious goals had been supported by the belief that other countries, including the United States, Britain, and France, would be interested in buying not only the new aircraft, but probably some of its components for their own aerospace development projects. This belief was most likely based on how this had been the case

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<sup>220</sup> Along with air interceptors, the BOMARC was a constituent part of the Defence Research Board (DRB) layered concept. The DRB layer concept is best explained by the Canada-US Emergency Defence Plan Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) 300/9, which states: “To protect as much of the warmaking capability of Canada and the United States against air attack as is possible with the force available, [for] the protection of Strategic Air Command bases.” Director Military Operations and Plans (DMO&P) “Air Defence of North America,” Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH], December 19, 1957, file 112.3M2.009 (D208). Overall, the BOMARC would play a limited role in continental air defense as it would be outdated by the time it was deployed, and would be proven to have very little ability to intercept the increasingly fast Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile developed by the Soviet Union. Maloney, “Secrets of the Bomarc: Re-Examining Canada's Misunderstood Missile,” 33-43.

<sup>221</sup> Story and Isinger, 1031.

for the CF-100. However, throughout the project, it became very clear that other countries were not interested in buying the CF-105 nor any of its components.<sup>222</sup>

There are many arguments in literature as to why this happened, and many exceed the scope of this work. However, most critical are those linked with the tendency of highly democratic countries to fall prey to sunk-cost biases.<sup>223</sup> More specifically, states tend to want to continue along with heavily subsidized and highly politicized national projects despite their potential strategic obsolescence or when more economically viable alternatives are being developed extra-nationally.

Canada's newly elected conservative government did not fall into such bias, at least not fully. After their election, the Canadian government first pressured A.V. Roe to drop some of its development and adopt existing technologies, most notably its bespoke air-air missile and the new "Iroquois" engine. However, this only contributed to dilute the technological edge of the plane and the Royal Canadian Air Force's interest in it, making it increasingly comparable to other jet airplanes available on the world market.

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<sup>222</sup> Story and Isinger, 1030-1031.

<sup>223</sup> University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (TRISA) TRADOC G2 Intelligence Support Activity, *The Applied Critical Thinking Handbook* (Leavenworth, KS: TRADOC G2, 2015), 108; Already in the 1950s the cost of aerospace development was such that only governments could provide the required level of funding. As Williamson and Millett explain: "The politics of aviation development showed collaboration at the political and technological level in every major military power. Only governments could make commercial aviation an initial success through investments in aircraft and landing sites; military research and development subventions fed new aviation manufacturing companies. Murray and Millett, 362.

### Diefenbaker's leadership

Most critical to the debacle of AVRO ARROW project are the actions of Canada's new Prime Minister in 1957, John G. Diefenbaker. As Donald C. Story and Russel Isinger explain, arguments can be made that he inherited the dilemma in a state of over-due decision from his Liberal predecessor and had to take the type of hard decisions they had not dare take.<sup>224</sup> Conversely, and much more convincingly, what Emilie Simpson defines as "critics" argue that John G. Diefenbaker ultimately failed to understand the strategic environment and how the AVRO ARROW still had a place within it despite the technological and project management hurdles discussed previously.<sup>225</sup> While Story and Isinger have argued with value that the decision he took was rational if considered from the perspective of the primacy of cutting on government expenses,<sup>226</sup> where he and his government failed is in successfully communicating such decision appropriately, especially to A.V. Roe itself.<sup>227</sup>

The main communication failure occurred in 1957 when Diefenbaker decided to prolong funding for the remaining aspects of the program for reasons—he claimed later—aimed at signaling to the direction of A.V. Roe that the project was to be cancelled and let them reassign or reduce their workforce with minimum disruption.<sup>228</sup> In their words, Diefenbaker claimed to have given the required indications to allow A.V. Roe time and

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<sup>224</sup> Story and Isinger, 1026, 1041.

<sup>225</sup> Simpson, 103-105.

<sup>226</sup> Smith, 308.

<sup>227</sup> Story and Isinger, 1026-1030.

<sup>228</sup> Smith, 309.

opportunity to find gainful employment for their highly technical employees elsewhere in this cutting edge industry. Conversely, however, Denis Smith explains that A. V. Roe likely legitimately saw the prolongation of funding as a politically acceptable solution meant to signal the desire of the government to actually continue with the project until prototypes were ready and further international sales potentially secured.<sup>229</sup> In fact, only upon the final closing of the project did A.V. Roe—all at once—terminate the employment of 14,000 employees, or about 90 percent of its workforce, creating a mayhem of public opinion and a mass exodus of highly technical experts to US firms such as NASA.<sup>230</sup> Therefore, Diefenbaker's decision was one of great compromise, as all true dilemmas are, and thus inevitably became the subject to much criticism from supporters and critics alike. However, what remains certain is that the decision could have been done without strangling Canada's military-industrial complex as it did, had it been done with a better communication plan.

In studying the personality of Prime Minister John G Diefenbaker, two factors overwhelmingly contributed to his inability. First, Diefenbaker had a tendency to place himself at the center of decision-making on all issues and neglect opportunities to seek sound advice from well-informed advisors, including on issues that went beyond his ability to grasp. As Emilie Simpson explains, some supporters have argued that he was receiving misleading or competing advice from the Ministry of Defense Production, National Defense and External affairs, complicating his ability to effect discerning.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>230</sup> Richter, 54.

<sup>231</sup> Simpson, 111.

There is much truth in this based on how the United States was successfully pressuring Canada's Military brass to adopt the BOMARC system and lobby for completion of the Northern Radar Systems still in their infancy over projects such as the CF-105, as obviously the US could easily sell their own jets to Canada later, notably the F-1 and F-2 then in development under criteria similar to the CF-105. US industry had also successfully lobbied with success its government not to buy the CF-100 years earlier, a fact largely minimized or ignored by the RCAF.<sup>232</sup>

Second, in brash but revealing terms, John G. Diefenbaker was an insecure man with little integrity, a small town lawyer, who had risen to power almost solely through immense ambition and a talent for theatrics in debate. He had cowered from military service in the First World War without ever admitting to it, yet had still exploited it in an existing loophole where war service implied an exoneration for a year of academic studies in post-graduate school.<sup>233</sup> His successes in legal practice were rather limited and often the product of conjecture and theatrics. In fact, so critical has history been to his cognitive ability that no works except his own biography have been found to put any value in his abilities beyond those discussed here, and in fact most are dedicated to prove wrong his own bibliographical claims.

### Conclusion

Perhaps the best way to express what happened with the A.V. Roe (AVRO) CF-105 ARROW is that Canada's post-war economy and political environment did not

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<sup>232</sup> Story and Isinger, 1026, 1045.

<sup>233</sup> Smith, 33.

provide the necessary resiliency to see it through. St. Laurent's post-war boldness had seen it come to life, but six years later, in 1957, Diefenbaker could not keep it going under his economic austerity program. It was simply too ambitious and protracted. Such actions are very stereotypical to those put forth by Williamson and Millett in describing the generic complexities of inter-war military developments:

If one took the senior military officers of the period at their word, defense politics turned on budgets, civilian timidity, insufficient intelligence, and a lack of political guidance. . . . The civilian political leaders of the period would have blamed their armed services' shortcomings on the reactionary attitudes of senior officers, the bureaucratic sloth of general staff, an arsenal mentality that refused to accept the innovations of civilian inventors, interservice and intraservice rivalry, regimental clubbiness, and a vision of [flying] that put more emphasis on form than effectiveness.<sup>234</sup>

Strategically, Canada was therefore constrained to acquire US jets to fulfill its air defense role, both in Canada and in Europe. Their capabilities were limited, but by virtue of their provenance still contributed to make Canada comply with the defense requirements asked by the United States and in NATO. More important were early warning systems and a functioning NORAD, both issues Diefenbaker's government and its successor did eventually resolve. But away from the focus on defense systems, what Canada truly lost in the AVRO ARROW is the ability of its military industrial complex to compete internationally, and most specifically with that of the United States. The edge gained in the Second World War was lost, both in ideological terms as framed in the ambitions of its people, and in its human capital dispersed in institutions such as NASA or other US aerospace corporations.

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<sup>234</sup> Murray and Millett, 367.

Consequently, what makes this project most relevant in its study is not that it was cancelled, but the clumsy way Diefenbaker proceeded to do so. The signals that he claimed to have sent for seven months of an impending decision were not understood as such by the public or the industry. In fact, they could not. To limit the project scope by cancelling the design of advanced engines or missiles, as he did, sends no such signal. In other words, based on the complexities of the strategic environment at the time and the economic dilemma the project posed, it can be argued that the single point of failure in the termination of the AVRO ARROW program is the way the decision was actually communicated to A.V. Roe and the Canadian population, and the responsibility for it falls squarely with the Prime Minister itself, John G. Diefenbaker. While the next Prime Minister revived much of the momentum in ensuring the survival of Canada's military industrial complex as it relates to nuclear weapons and related systems, those ideals too crumbled only a few years later under the even more drastic move towards "Soft Power"<sup>235</sup> and Liberalism led by Prime Minister Pierre-Elliot Trudeau, father of current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

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<sup>235</sup> Nye.

## CHAPTER 5

### DIEFENBAKER AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Canada has no intention whatsoever of imposing any embargo on Canadian goods in Cuban trade.

— John G. Diefenbaker, *Winnipeg Time*, October 31, 1960.

#### Introduction

John G. Diefenbaker mishandled Canada's response to the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. He delayed Canada's contribution to the defense of North America in ways and to an extent that brought him contempt from the Canadian population and from a US president. It heavily contributed to his ousting of government in the months to follow, through a vote of non-confidence, preceding by about a year his party losing the next elections. The crisis was the culminating point of his emotional, intellectual, and political simpleness. Canadians recognized he had always lacked the leadership required to lead the Nation. Through the unfolding of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Canadians also came to see in full light the necessity for Canada to yield nuclear weapons. In October 1962, 80 percent of Canadians backed Kennedy's position, but Diefenbaker went the other way.<sup>236</sup>

It is from the Liberal opposition exploiting this opportunity, and grabbing power in 1963, that Canada's nuclear ambitions were finally fulfilled. A political party which had often opposed nuclear weapons now fully embraced them as a central element to its

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<sup>236</sup> John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 62.

political campaign against the Conservatives of Diefenbaker. Central to this political debacle is Diefenbaker himself.

As discussed in chapter 3, Diefenbaker had always been intent in placing himself at the center of diplomacy, calling it “personal diplomacy.”<sup>237</sup> In the fall of 1962, his inability to use personal power to influence his team, most notably DEA and DND, forced him even further down this road to isolation, and furthered his reliance on “personal diplomacy” to enact foreign policy. Therefore, in studying his management of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it is necessary to analyze the dynamic and effect of his personal relationship with Cuban President Fidel Castro and US President John F Kennedy. His perspectives on Soviet Communism must also be considered. All three were a deep source of antagonism for Diefenbaker, and as such came to heavily influence his management of Canada’s response to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

#### Dief and the Cuban Missile Crisis

In 1962 the Progressive Conservative party led by Diefenbaker was divided, and as mitigation for an expected vote of non-confidence he called for elections to be held in June.<sup>238</sup> His intent was to “stave off opposition from within his own party’s rank, and shore up the government in the House.”<sup>239</sup> On the nuclear weapons front, Diefenbaker’s government was still being inconsistent. While it was allowing the CAF to get ready to accommodate nuclear weapons on its platforms, it was also letting the DEA press ahead

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<sup>237</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 37.

<sup>238</sup> Maloney, 261.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

with anti-nuclear initiatives. Diefenbaker was playing populist, allowing ambiguity to fester while maximising popular support. However, the Liberal opposition was now growing increasingly impatient in seeing the Prime Minister and his Defense Minister clarify their position on the issue.<sup>240</sup> This change in attitude was justified by their new electoral platform which since 1961 had grown in support for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The United States had also “sensed an opening” in this direction in late 1961 when Dean Rusk announced publicly that the United States was willing to give Canada nuclear weapons if it wanted them, under joint control.<sup>241</sup> This revelation added ammunition for the Liberal opposition to criticize the Diefenbaker government on its stalled approach.

As events of the Cuban Missile Crisis quickly escalated in late October 1962, Diefenbaker essentially did “too little, too late.”<sup>242</sup> In sum, he first delayed in providing an answer to raise military readiness levels as requested by the United States. His government also denied 632 out of 640 US requests for overflights carrying nuclear weapons.<sup>243</sup> They also refused to allow US forces to move nuclear warheads over Canadian airspace from Bangor, Main, to US bases in Labrador and Newfoundland.<sup>244</sup> He publicly announced that the appropriate response to the United States suspecting the existence of nuclear weapons on Cuba was to send a team of international observers to

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<sup>240</sup> Maloney, 263.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. Also explained with more contextual information in Haydon, 34.

<sup>242</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 61.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

confirm the information. He did not at any time change his cordial relationship with Cuba, despite US pressures to do so in order to show bilateral support.

In the meantime, however, the CAF grew extremely angry at the Prime Minister's approach to the crisis, and after many days of delays acted unilaterally.<sup>245</sup> A critical point of contention was the issue of the CAF matching the readiness levels of the United States as a pre-emptive measure and show of force against the Soviet Union. This idea was the fundamental backbone of US nuclear defense strategy. Yet when John F. Kennedy called Diefenbaker personally to request such action on October 23, when it was failing to materialize through other channels, Diefenbaker systematically refused.<sup>246</sup> It is his refusal that led to the first unilateral action by the CAF's leadership, which consisted of raising the alert status of its military force to match that of the United States. Within a few days, the CAF also started to contribute directly to the United States militarily, with Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities being operational on October 28.<sup>247</sup> These arrangements were made either through the pre-arranged NORAD procedures, or through what appears to be person-to-person relationships in the highest echelons of both US and Canadian military services.<sup>248</sup>

In such context the CAF's support to the Missile Crisis was two twofold. First, it provided surveillance and interception capabilities in support of NORAD. Second, it

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<sup>245</sup> Maloney, 280-283.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>247</sup> Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993), 153.

<sup>248</sup> Maloney, 282.

provided Joint Naval surveillance and ASW capabilities in support of US forces in the Atlantic, most specifically along the US-Canada Coast, from a latitude slightly South of New York all the way to Newfoundland.<sup>249</sup> It is the Argus ASW aircrafts that contributed the most to these efforts, along with Canada's Atlantic submarines fleet. The contribution of the CAF to the latter task was limited due to its aircraft carrier, the HMS Bonaventure, and four of its Tribal Class destroyers being in an exercise in Europe.<sup>250</sup> These were eventually recalled, but too late to contribute.

There remain some ambiguities as to whether the CAF elements assigned to either of those tasks were equipped with nuclear weapons. Recent documents obtained from Maloney prove that RCAF arranged for the delivery and equipping of nuclear warheads on the BOMARC missiles in North Bay.<sup>251</sup> Maloney also argues that, although still unconfirmed, it is also most likely that Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) airplanes carried nuclear-tipped weapons in an ASW role.<sup>252</sup> Their task was to act as a backstop measure for any deep incursions of Soviet ballistic missile submarines.<sup>253</sup>

There is ample documentation to argue that the CAF were relevant in their support of the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, they did so too late to have much effect on how the actual events unfolded. For example, the RCN detected a significant number of Soviet submarines operating in the Atlantic and in route to critical areas close to the

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<sup>249</sup> Haydon, 153.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Maloney, 287.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

densely populated East Coast of the United States.<sup>254</sup> However, it was also found that the Soviet ballistic missile submarines had already penetrated into coastal areas before the RCN began their detection role.<sup>255</sup> Another incident provides further insights as to the actual readiness level of the CAF by the end of October 1962. As Maloney explains: “on 31 October . . . 30<sup>th</sup> NORAD region alerted its [nuclear-tipped] BOMARCs and scrambled its nuclear-armed interceptors when the Mid-Canada Line reported that two unidentified aircraft had penetrated Canadian airspace. Nothing was found and the reason for the tracks was never discovered.”<sup>256</sup> In such a context, we can therefore conclude that the CAF contributed successfully to their role in Continental defense thanks to their leadership and planning, and did so despite the delays created by their Prime Minister.

#### Who is the antagonist? Fidel Castro?

In 1959 a thirty-three years old Fidel Castro completed a diplomatic tour of North America. He had just led his *26th of July* revolutionary movement to power in Cuba, after three years of guerrilla struggle that had deposed the totalitarian regime of President Fulgencio Batista. Contrary to popular belief, Castro was not a staunch Communist, at least not yet.<sup>257</sup> It was his less-charismatic brother Raul and most trustworthy advisor Ernesto “Che” Guevara who were the first and foremost Communists. In fact, it is

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<sup>254</sup> Haydon, 152-175.

<sup>255</sup> Ibidl, 5.

<sup>256</sup> Scott Douglas Sagan, *The Limits of Safety* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 99.

<sup>257</sup> A. A Fursenko and Timothy J Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble* (New York: Norton, 1997), 15-16.

primarily their influence over the revolutionary government that pressured Fidel Castro to embrace communism and enact such a type of government. According to Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali in *One Hell of a Gamble: The Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Castro's fuller embrace of the communist ideology happened more from a compromise than as a deliberate intent.<sup>258</sup>

What steered Fidel Castro towards communism was the need for security against American interventionism. After a resounding victory over the US-backed anti-Castro invasion at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, and a persistent threat of a subsequent invasion of greater magnitude, he needed intelligence gathering support, security advice and military equipment.<sup>259</sup> This is something the Soviet Union was more than happy to provide as long as it came with satisfactory ideological fervor. In the early 1960s, the latter was an important dimension to Soviet support for the Cuban cause because of the ideological schism that was building between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's doctrine of "peaceful coexistence" and that of armed interventionism then professed by the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>260</sup>

In 1963 David Galula described in *Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice* how "The Chinese Communists assert that the armed struggle is both necessary and indispensable, that victory must be won by force, that "liberation" must not be granted or gained by compromise."<sup>261</sup> He further explained that "when the insurgent

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<sup>258</sup> Fursenko and Naftali, 15-16.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>261</sup> David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 33.

seizes power after an armed struggle, his victory is complete, his authority absolute. The war has polarized the population, revealing friends and enemies, which makes it easier to implement the Communist postwar program.”<sup>262</sup> From these words we can see the growing difference in ideology between the Soviets and the Chinese, and how the former saw it as a threat debasing its ideological construct for the expansion of Communism. From the Soviet point of view, such aggressive internal repression would not work in some of the post-colonial countries it aimed to subdue. In these cases, any insurgency would be based, at least at first, against this very narrative of armed repression. Unfortunately, in the late 1950s, this difference does not appear to have been well understood in Western foreign policy circles, nor how it may have driven the Soviet Union to grasp strongly on the Cuban opportunity as a means to expansionism, geographically and ideologically.

As Fidel Castro underwent his tour of North America in 1959, Fursenko and Naftali indeed explain that the US government had not yet understood to much extent his motives and methods, let alone defined whether or not he was a threat to its foreign policy.<sup>263</sup> This point of view is most convincing based on the evidence advanced, and an absence of contradicting signals in Canadian archives indicates similar perspective in Diefenbaker’s government. There was no significant precedent to inform concerns over Fidel Castro’s intentions outside of his own country. There are some indications, however, that there were political risks in Canada’s leadership building personal relationships with Fidel Castro. John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna illustrate this in

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<sup>262</sup> Galula, 33.

<sup>263</sup> Fursenko and Naftali, 7-8.

*Canada-Cuba Relations*, explaining that when Castro visited Canada in 1959 Diefenbaker already knew any personal relationship with him could hinder Canada's bilateral ties with the United States, and therefore avoided to meet Castro when he visited Montreal.<sup>264</sup>

In any case, in the summer of 1959 Fidel Castro was seen predominantly as a charismatic revolutionary in the backyard of North America, who through great resolve had overthrown a despotic regime. The same way he seduced many young idealists at Harvard University, he rode on a wave of popularity in the Canadian media.<sup>265</sup> The perception that good and open Canadian foreign diplomacy was being done created much of the hype. As discussed in chapter 2, it was indeed an important part of Canada's national identity at the time. Canada still ran on St. Laurent's vision for a Canada strong by its international alliances. Arguably, many also still embraced the probability that Diefenbaker was doing good of his intent for "personal diplomacy," as chapter 3 presented.

In sum, Diefenbaker took personal pride in this relationship, despite the hurdles. He was ubiquitously clear to the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Arnold Heeney, and to Fidel Castro that he did not support communism.<sup>266</sup> He also was clear he did not support Castro's appeal to the Soviet Union for the emplacement of nuclear weapons on his Island during the Missile Crisis.<sup>267</sup> Yet Diefenbaker was intent on letting

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<sup>264</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 51.

<sup>265</sup> Fursenko and Naftali, 8-10.

<sup>266</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 51.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

Castro manage his own house as he pleased, without interference. Indeed Kirk and McKenna also describe the relationship as very “paternalistic.”<sup>268</sup> They argue Diefenbaker and his government were trying to sell democracy as a political philosophy to Castro, much in line with Canada’s passion with soft power. In considering this approach with Diefenbaker’s personality described in chapter 3, a link can also be seen where Diefenbaker may have seen this relationship as a rare opportunity to exert the sort of referential power on the world stage he was failing to obtain at home or otherwise. In such ways, Diefenbaker likely became infatuated with this charismatic man from what the new relationship meant for his own image. This relationship was also a success in his dire ambitions to conduct “personal diplomacy.”<sup>269</sup> Blinded by his own parochialism, Castro and Cuba became disproportionally important to his notion of “Canada.”

In the next two years there was much media support for the Canada-Cuba relationship, most often believing—as a Cuban delegation promised in 1961—that it would provide great economical returns to Canada.<sup>270</sup> In reality it did not produce the economic returns this delegation expected.<sup>271</sup> More than anything else, it provided a very stable tourist destination to Canadians. Therefore, in retrospect, this diplomatic relationship became a catalyst for six decades of both financially acceptable and culturally precious Canadian-Cuban commercial relations. In fact, until the beginning of the “détente” in US-Cuban relations in 2015, Canada remained the paramount Western commercial partner of

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

Cuba, especially in providing banking services and agricultural spare parts, along with some oil-related industries.<sup>272</sup> Canadians enjoy Cuban rum, cigars, and a place to vacation in the sun that is not shared with hordes of American tourists. Some have attributed these benefits to Diefenbaker's leadership, and they were right. But these same analysts must consider that in doing so Diefenbaker nearly ruined the Canada-United States relationship, which was built over decades of strong bilateral support and trust.

Who is the antagonist? President John F. Kennedy?

As discussed in chapter 3, the relationship between Diefenbaker and Kennedy started to wither just about as soon as they first met. In the summer of 1962 their belligerence grew worse. The leader of the opposition Lester B. Pearson alluded to both DEA and his own party being intent on adopting nuclear weapons along the joint control mechanisms offered by the Kennedy administration. This was extremely frustrating to Diefenbaker as he had often pledged such joint controls had not been offered by the United States, or even that the United States did not want to share nuclear weapons at all. This had in fact been the case within NATO before the thinning out of the Atomic Energy Act in the early 50s, but the question had not been clear to him with regards to the Defense of North America. It was also a source of frustration for Diefenbaker as he was seeing his political nemesis of the Liberal party, and competitor in the upcoming election, perceptively build a stronger relationship with the Kennedy than the one he had. In reaction to this contradictory (but true) announcement on the possibility of joint controls by the leader of the opposition Lester B. Pearson, Diefenbaker conceived a strategy to

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 26.

discredit him, even if it meant also denouncing the US President in the process. To do so, he announced to the US ambassador that was intent on revealing Kennedy's "push" note described in chapter 3 to the media.<sup>273</sup> In learning of such a plan, Kennedy is said to have referred to Diefenbaker as "a prick, a fucker, a shit."<sup>274</sup>

It is therefore clear that the relationship between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker was strained before the crisis began. It again got worse when Diefenbaker ignored the multiple requests of Kennedy's administration to demonstrate support and resolve against Cuba and the Soviet Union. This is especially true of the personal request Kennedy made by phone for the alert status of the CAF to be increased. To crown their interpersonal failure, only a few hours after Kennedy's famous speech on television announcing to the world the discovery of nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba, and after having provided the photographic evidence to Canada a few days earlier, Diefenbaker announced publicly that Canada's proposed solution to the crisis was to send UN inspectors to confirm the evidence.<sup>275</sup> Kennedy was dismayed at how Diefenbaker, as leader of an allied nation, showed little trust in his analysis of the situation<sup>276</sup> Secretly, he most certainly vowed to one day influence Diefenbaker's political demise, and in fact Diefenbaker accused him of doing so in his memoirs.<sup>277</sup> But his efforts in such an endeavor were probably in vain. Already, in the fall of 1962, Canadian clearly expressed

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<sup>273</sup> Maloney, 262-263.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>275</sup> Haydon, 190.

<sup>276</sup> Maloney, 281.

<sup>277</sup> Diefenbaker, 352.

in multiple polls that they were in support of the position President Kennedy had taken on the crisis. Canadians also supported in great numbers the Liberal new push to acquire nuclear weapon for the CAF.<sup>278</sup> As such, Canadians signaled to the Liberal opposition that providing nuclear warheads to the CAF would not—as Diefenbaker had feared for his entire tenure—alienate their party’s popularity in polls. Diefenbaker’s inconsistent position on nuclear weapons were denounced and debunked. They were so at the same time as Canada realized that Diefenbaker’s was incapable of personal diplomacy with its strongest ally simply because of his own egoism and self-centeredness.

#### Who are the antagonists? The Communists?

In the early 1960s, Diefenbaker’s government did not concern itself with Communism to the same extent Kennedy’s government did. As discussed in chapter 2, this philosophy is testament to Canada’s Liberalist point of view, which had been developed by the post-war Liberal party, perpetuated by St. Laurent, and had taken root even within the Conservative party. This does not mean that Diefenbaker wasn’t against Communism, nor against interventionism in the containment of Communism. In fact, literature on Diefenbaker points otherwise. The Conservative party, even before Diefenbaker, had built a political platform of less government involvement in the lives of the people, not more.

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<sup>278</sup> A poll taken by the Canadian Peace Research Institute during the missile crisis indicated “almost 80 percent of Canadians backed Kennedy’s position. Kirk and Peter McKenna, 62. For his part, Sean Maloney refers to Peyton V. Lyon, *Canada in World Affairs, 1961-1963* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 89, in quoting that at least 60 percent of the Canadian population favored the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Maloney, 294.

It is also quite likely, as Maloney, Kirk and McKenna propose, that the anti-nuclear idealists heading the Canadian DEA had a strong influence over Diefenbaker in arguing the solicitude of the “peaceful coexistence” doctrine advanced by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>279</sup> After all such ideal presented itself as an opportunity towards their long hoped global nuclear disarmament.

Diefenbaker fundamentally disagreed with the communist ideology, but as already explained in chapter 3, he did not believe in the need for strong interventionism. From what he knew of Kennedy, and the distorted image he entertained of him out of their personal animosity, he probably feared him disproportionately.<sup>280</sup> In such ways the threat posed by the belligerents of the Cuban Missile Crisis did not ubiquitously measure, in Diefenbaker’s mind, to the threat of a conflict between the superpowers, let alone to a nuclear war. To an extent beyond reason, it seemed to have measured in the paranoia of a single man, Kennedy. And so faced with the threat of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, Diefenbaker seemed to have been more concerned over Kennedy’s over-reaction than Soviet Union actions in Cuba.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the Cuban Missile Crisis served to illustrate Diefenbaker’s failure at leadership in time of crisis. Infatuated by his successful personal diplomacy with Cuban President Fidel Castro, maintained despite their strong and clearly communicated divergence on communism, he failed to grasp the potential threat a revolutionary Cuba

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<sup>279</sup> Fursenko and Naftali, 49.

<sup>280</sup> Smith, 380-388, 495-508.

could pose to North American security. He also failed to see how this relationship with Cuba could antagonize the one with the United States, in part blinded by his very intimate animosity towards US President John F. Kennedy. His distrust for military leaders convinced him to dismiss early military considerations to the crisis, deepening the schism between his government and the military, and leading the latter to take unilateral actions. He continued to espouse the anti-nuclear views of DEA out of parochialism and opportunism. Out of jealousy for his political arch nemesis of the Liberal opposition Lester B. Pearson, he also believed he could leverage the Soviet doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” pushed by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev as an opportunity to make himself a name as a peace maker, and who knows, perhaps win a Nobel Prize. The latter was done at the expense of the very real threat Soviet nuclear missiles posed. It illustrates Diefenbaker’s self-centeredness. In such ways Diefenbaker failed to influence positively most aspects of the crisis.

It is the military that saved the US-Canada relationship during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This reality, along with Diefenbaker’s poor management of the crisis to the Liberal opposition and many conservatives to disposses Diefenbaker of any power he thought he had through an intense media and political campaign. Ironically, it can be said that it is Diefenbaker’s failure to advance the acquisition of nuclear weapons and his lackadaisical stance in the Cuban Missile Crisis that drove the Liberal party to strongly embrace a pro-nuclear position for their successful campaign of 1962-63. In other words, the Cuban missile crisis and Diefenbaker’s failure to manage it acted as the catalyst that tipped the Lester B. Pearson commitment towards finally arming the CAF with nuclear warheads.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

From 1948 to 1957, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent built on the Liberal party's impetus towards Internationalism. He forged a place for an independent Canada, armed with nuclear weapons, amongst the growing alliance that was NATO and ultimately NORAD as a joint command. As such, his tenure epitomized Canada's strategic tradition of military alliances.

His leadership was exceptional. He was endowed with both expert and referential power at a time of growing anxieties towards the Soviet Union and Communism. In large part from his bilingual upbringing, St. Laurent understood the values he shared with French and English Canadians, and leveraged them along with his expert knowledge of Canada's growing alliances to articulate a clear vision for his country. This vision was one of a prosperous Canada, emboldened by the stability afforded from strong alliances, and protected of oppression by strong military deterrence that ultimately would include nuclear weapons.

Such vision brought remarkable cohesion and synergies to his government. It most notably enabled his protégé Lester B. Pearson to help define limited objectives for the Korean War, and saw the CAF contribute a large number of troops to this effort. Their actions represented well Canada's strategic tradition of forward defense.<sup>281</sup> Under St. Laurent's mentoring, Pearson boldly led UN diplomatic efforts to resolve the Suez Canal Crisis. He received a Nobel peace prize for his efforts.

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<sup>281</sup> Refers to the strategic traditions defined by Maloney, xix.

The hallmark of St. Laurent's role in Canada's nuclear venture came from his clear understanding of Canada's strategic environment, most notably how it related to the Defense of the North American Continent. He took proactive measures to enable all its related critical capabilities, and within this context there was neither doubt nor concern that nuclear-tipped weapons were to be critical requirements. By 1957, however, St. Laurent had lost his former energy and felt compelled to return to his original ambitions as a lawyer. On the altar of his party's political defeat, he left many of these critical capabilities to be fulfilled by the Conservative John G. Diefenbaker. The next six years acted to reinforce the pertinence of St. Laurent's vision.

From 1957 to 1963, Diefenbaker aimlessly delayed Canada's ultimate yielding of nuclear weapons, eroding on the way the strength of Canada's alliances. Diefenbaker's inability to lead is a product of having aged into Premiership rather than growing in leadership. What finally got him to power after more than three decades of an unremarkable career in politics are his unabashed ambition and rhetorical skills. The latter bloomed when in the political opposition at the very time St. Laurent fatigued from his selfless service to country. As Prime Minister, he failed to be a man of his times on many issues, none less than in embracing the sort of Royalism Canada had fought to shed since the First World War. The leadership he appointed and supported in DEA polarized Canada's public opinion and drove a wedge between Canada's inherited vision and one staunchly against nuclear weapons. His reaction to this dichotomy hemorrhaged of narcissism and Populism. In such ways, and in putting himself at the center of Canada's diplomacy, he ensured its ultimate failure.

In 1962, Diefenbaker defended a point of view where arming with nuclear warheads the weapons his government had acquired was still a matter of choice to be made by the population, but it was not. The only choice that remained was whether Canada should accept American warheads for the plurality of weapon systems by now operational in all services in Canada or in Europe, or scrap this \$685 millions' worth of military equipment whose strategic purpose was indeed to act as delivery vehicles for such warheads.<sup>282</sup> This was a situation that Diefenbaker himself had plunged the country into. Having already scuttled the CF-105 AVRO Arrow in a similarly twisted dilemma, he stood ready to destroy everything his government and that of St. Laurent had gained through Canada's nuclear venture, most importantly its influence with the United States. If it had not been of the CAF unilateral actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, forced by Diefenbaker's indecisiveness, Canada may have become a much less important ally of the United States. But in the management of the AVRO Arrow and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the country saw how much Diefenbaker's lack of leadership was driving Canada into irrelevance.

One can therefore open the history books describing the period of up to 1957 and that of 1963 onwards and perceive an almost uninterrupted continuation of Canada's nuclear weapons venture. St. Laurent's vision endured through the Diefenbaker's era and served to further Canada's strategic role in NATO and with the United States, to this day its most important ally.

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<sup>282</sup> Newman, 342.

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